OBSERVATIONS

ON

CHRONIC WEAKNESS.

BY

THOMAS WITHERS, M.D.

YORK:

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MDCCLXXVII.

OBSERVATIONS

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THOMAS WITHERS, M.D.
(B. 1815 † 1864.)

TO

Sir JOHN PRINGLE, Bart.

Phyſician in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY,

AND

Preſident of the Royal Society.

SIR,

I Take this opportunity of acknowledging my obligations to you, for your peruſal of a treatiſe lately publiſhed by me on the Abuſe of Medicine. I know that vanity is a weakneſs; yet I confeſs that mine was ſomewhat flattered by the favorable opinion you conceived of that publication, and the obliging manner in which you were pleaſed to ſignify it to me. The ſtudy of medicine, Sir, is one of my greateſt pleaſures; and I ſhould be happy

to promote, in any degree, the ſucceſsful practice of that uſeful and noble art. If, at the ſame time, any production of mine ſhould happen to afford the ſmalleſt entertainment in a leiſure hour to a man of your character and talents, ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed in the literary world, I ſhall have attained a point beyond my expectation. It is, Sir, with ſingular ſatisfaction, that I have the honor of ſending theſe few pages into the world under your patronage, and of ſubſcribing myſelf, with all reſpect and gratitude,

Your much obliged,

And moſt obedient ſervant,

THO. WITHERS.

York, March 14,
1777.

ADVERTISEMENT.

CHRONIC WEAKNESS is a frequent, diſtreſſing, and ſometimes dangerous diſeaſe. It attacks perſons of all ages, of both ſexes, of every temperament, and in every climate. It is accompanied always with anxiety, and often with ſevere and laſting pains.

Chronic weakneſs is a term, which is ſufficiently underſtood by every one, who is in the leaſt converſant with medical writings. It is a ſpecies of weakneſs, which ought to be diſtinguiſhed from the ſudden depreſſion of ſtrength, that occurs in fevers and other acute diſeaſes. Conſidering the multiplicity of medical authors, it is not a little ſurpriſing, that the ſubject of chronic weakneſs ſhould never have been fully and accurately diſcuſſed. The great Boerhaave, under the title of the relaxed fibre, touched upon the outlines of this

diſeaſe

diſeaſe in his elements of the practice of medicine. His learned commentator, Van Swieten, has enlarged upon the ſubject. But there are many important facts, relating both to the hiſtory and to the cure of this complaint, which are not to be found among their obſervations.

The author was at firſt induced to beſtow particular attention on this ſubject, becauſe he ſaw that ſeveral of his friends and acquaintance labored under the complaint, and he was anxious to relieve them. Succeſs in a few inſtances was followed with an opportunity of practice in many others.—The author does not imagine that this eſſay contains any new obſervations on chronic weakneſs, which may not have occurred to men of large experience and extenſive knowledge in the profeſſion of medicine; but he hopes, that to others who have not had the moſt deſirable opportunities of improvement, a more full and accurate account, than he has hitherto met with, of the ſymptoms of chronic

weakneſs,

weakneſs, together with its cauſes, diſtinction, prognoſtic, and method of cure, will not be unacceptable.

Chronic weakneſs is not only a ſource of much miſery in itſelf, but it lays the foundation for a variety of other diſeaſes of the moſt fatal kind. Hence the neceſſity of a timely application of remedies for the removal of a diſorder, which is productive of ſuch unhappy conſequences. This ſpecies of weakneſs is univerſally allowed by phyſicians, to conſtitute a moſt important part of the numerous chronic diſorders with which it is united. The ſtudy, therefore, of chronic weakneſs, is a neceſſary prelude to the ſtudy of chronic complaints in general. The author of theſe pages intends, if his health and leiſure will permit, to treat hereafter of ſeveral other diſeaſes incident to the human body, and for this reaſon alſo, found it expedient to premiſe theſe obſervations on chronic weakneſs.

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The author, conſidering the nature and danger of the diſeaſe, was ſorry to find that it was ſometimes looked upon as an unintelligible caſe, not to be diſtinguiſhed by any particular name. At other times he found it miſtaken for the hypochondriac complaint, the hyſterical affection, a latent gout, a low nervous fever, and various other diſorders which exiſted only as effects of chronic weakneſs. In conſequence of ſuch miſtakes, the practice was neceſſarily imperfect, confuſed, and erroneous. Sometimes it accidentally relieved, but often it increaſed the malady. It was always unſteady, being regulated by no principles, and founded on no rational ſyſtem. By this means the diſeaſe, through imprudent treatment, was often rendered more obſtinate, and even incurable.

The following obſervations have been carefully collected from a variety of caſes, both in private practice and in public hoſpitals. Theſe caſes are ſtill in the poſſeſſion of the writer, but it will be unneceſ-

ſary

ſary and unintereſting to crowd the preſent work by entering into a minute detail of them. In ſelecting theſe obſervations on chronic weakneſs from the above-mentioned caſes, the author has been particularly cautious to ſet forth every fact which might be conducive to health, and he has been equally cautious to ſuppreſs every idea of theory which, though capable of ſome ſupport from ſophiſtical reaſonings, was not confirmed by experience, and might have led to pernicious practice.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

CHRONIC WEAKNESS.

SECTION I.

CHRONIC WEAKNESS, being a very common diſeaſe, merits great attention from the practitioners of medicine. The human race is ſo much degenerated from its original ſtate of conſtitutional vigor, that perfect health is rarely ſeen; and the greateſt part of mankind are found to labor, more or leſs, under the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs. The frequency of this diſeaſe is much to be regretted, when we reflect that it principally ariſes from our own negligent and imprudent conduct. Men are not diſpoſed to ſubmit to Na-

ture; but they wantonly deviate from the laws preſcribed by her for their welfare and happineſs. Our manner of living is frequently unnatural, and differs widely from the rude ſimplicity of our anceſtors. We are often indolent to an exceſs. We not only indulge ourſelves in luxuries, but weakly think them neceſſary for the real comfort and enjoyment of life.—The diſorder, that I am going to treat of, is one which afflicts mankind in a ſtrange variety of forms, and conduces greatly to their miſery and deſtruction.

The term CHRONIC is uſed here to diſtinguiſh this ſpecies of weakneſs from that which occurs in acute diſeaſes. The one comes on ſuddenly; the other ſteals upon the patient by ſlow degrees. The depreſſion of ſtrength, conſequent on febrile complaints, is often removed in a ſhort time by the aſſiſtance only of a mild reſtorative diet. Chronic weakneſs, on the contrary, is difficult to remove, and its cure is generally found to be the work of time. Yet ſo efficacious are the remedies and regimen employed in the treatment of this complaint, that few patients would fail of obtaining conſiderable relief, if they had but ſufficient reſolution to purſue with ſteadineſs thoſe means of cure, which

which the experience of ages has proved to be ſucceſsful.—As far as the ſubject will admit, I ſhall enumerate the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs in that order in which they naturally occur.

Chronic weakneſs uſually begins with morbid affections of the ſtomach and bowels. The functions of the alimentary canal are of the firſt importance; but its ſtructure is delicate and tender. Flatulence, acidity, heart-burn, coſtiveneſs, or colic pains frequently afford the firſt ſigns of the approaching diſeaſe. A diminution of appetite and a ſlight dejection of ſpirits ſoon occur. The muſcular ſtrength is impaired, and the patient feels a languor and an averſion to motion. This diſpoſition to indolence continually grows ſtronger, and a ſenſe of wearineſs is eaſily induced.

By degrees thoſe ſymptoms increaſe, and the whole conſtitution is more and more depreſſed. The ſimple ſolids are relaxed, and the nervous power is diminiſhed. The uneaſineſs of the mind, ariſing from a debilitated ſtate of the body, becomes more conſiderable, and contributes much to accelerate the progreſs of the diſeaſe. The aliment is often taken without appetite,

and is very imperfectly digeſted. The ſtomach and bowels are diſtended with air, and, in conſequence of that diſtenſion, they are thrown into convulſive contractions, attended with pain and anxiety. A conſiderable quantity of limpid water, or of the acid and putrid matters contained in the ſtomach, regurgitates frequently into the mouth. In this ſtate of the patient there is ſometimes a ſenſe of palpitation in the breaſt, with a ſhortneſs and difficulty of breathing. The head, from the great connection which ſubſiſts between that part and the ſtomach, is affected with pain and dizzineſs. The pain of the head in ſome caſes is extremely conſtant and ſevere. The dizzineſs ariſes ſometimes to ſuch a height that the patient ſtaggers like a drunken man. The food, according to its nature, is apt to run too far into the acid or putrid fermentation, and to load the alimentary canal with acrid and offenſive matters. In this ſituation of the patient, a diarrhæa ſometimes takes place, which is a natural and ſalutary effort of nature. At other times obſtinate coſtiveneſs and colic pains ſupervene.

The action of the heart and arteries is greatly impaired, and the circulation of the blood is languid

languid and imperfect. The contractions of the heart are ſometimes ſlow, but generally frequent and always weak. The pulſe of courſe is often feeble, irregular, and frequent. If the arterial ſyſtem be under a ſtate of contraction, and there be an inflammatory diſpoſition in the habit, the pulſe is ſmall and contracted. This ſymptom occurs in young people of the melancholic or ſanguine-melancholic temperament, who are particularly ſubject to the gout. The blood does not circulate with vigor, and ſcarcely enters the extreme capillary veſſels, which are every where diſtributed over the ſurface of the body. Or if the blood enters thoſe veſſels, it almoſt ſtagnates within them, and gives the countenance a livid, bloated, and unnatural appearance. From this weakneſs of the circulation, inſenſible perſpiration becomes languid, and the ſkin appears dry and contracted. As the nervous power and circulation of the blood are defective, the native heat of the body is diminiſhed, and the patient frequently complains of an univerſal ſenſe of coldneſs. In this condition he has frequent recourſe to large fires and very warm cloathing, which relax the cutaneous pores, increaſe the irritability of the body, and render it highly obnoxious to the influence of cold.

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The ſtrength of the patient, in proceſs of time, becomes ſtill more depreſſed, and a ſenſe of heavineſs and laſſitude is more eaſily brought on, either by walking, riding, or any other gentle muſcular motion. From this effect an opinion is haſtily adopted, that exerciſe is pernicious, and ought therefore to be avoided; and this opinion is the more readily complied with, as it perfectly coincides with the patient's inactive diſpoſition. In this ſtate of the complaint, a moderate exertion even of muſcular ſtrength exhauſts the nervous ſyſtem, deſtroys the appetite, produces ſickneſs, palpitation of the heart, and quickneſs of breathing.

The mind becomes as indolent as the body, and as incapable of almoſt every ſpecies of exertion. Its efforts are weak and fluctuating; its judgments various and undeciſive. It is unfit for deep reflection or cloſe attention to any particular ſubject. The memory is greatly impaired, and not exerciſed without a ſenſation of uneaſineſs. The aſſociation of ideas is often imperfect. Slight contradictions or ſmall violations of the rules of ceremony and politeneſs offend the patient, and induce a tranſient fit of grief or anger which leaves him dejected and exhauſted. The leaſt ſeeming neglect is fully

fully weighed, and ſometimes miſtaken for an intended affront. This weakneſs of mind often appears in perſons whoſe natural temper is amiable and indulgent. Along with theſe ſymptoms we find timidity, dejection, or even deſpair to be the frequent attendants of chronic weakneſs. Such mental debility occurs in patients who were before remarkable for their firmneſs, vivacity, and acuteneſs of underſtanding. During this dejected ſtate of the mind, the whole conſtitution is amazingly diſturbed. The diſtribution of the blood and of the nervous influence is very unequal. The heart palpitates, the ſtomach and inteſtines ſwell with flatulence, and there is frequently a copious diſcharge of pale urine. At the ſame time we muſt obſerve, that it is not uncommon in this diſeaſe for the patient to have a mind unaffected by fear, in a bodily frame that is weakened and exhauſted.

From the want of vigor in the brain and of greater force of circulation, obſtructions of the menſes frequently occur, attended with pains in the back and in the region of the womb. In ſome caſes the menſes do not make their appearance at the uſual period of life. When they do occur, they are often irregular, and accom-

accompanied with fever, pain, and anxiety. By conſent of parts ſpaſmodic contractions of the bowels are induced. If there be a topical laxity of the uterine veſſels, the fluor albus or copious irregular diſcharges of blood, accompanied with ſevere pains, are the common conſequence. But it is well known, that a ſuppreſſion of the menſes, or too frequent and copious evacuations from the uterus, are always followed with conſiderable depreſſion of ſtrength.

In this ſtate of the conſtitution, nutrition is very imperfectly performed. The animal oil is reabſorbed; the blood-veſſels are not ſufficiently diſtended; the fleſh ſeems looſe and waſted; and the ſkin is every where ſallow. The countenance in particular exhibits a dry, palid, and unwholeſome appearance. The eyes are dull and heavy. The tongue is white and covered with a viſcid matter. The uvula and velum pendulum of the palate, in ſome caſes, are at times ſo relaxed as to prove extremely troubleſome. The lips loſe their color, and the breath, from the foulneſs of the ſtomach, is often remarkably fœtid. The extremities of the body are not unfrequently affected with anxiety, and an aching pain of a peculiar nature, diſtinct

diſtinct from chronic rheumatiſm. At other times chronic rheumatiſm occurs, which retards the cure and greatly diſtreſſes the patient. The joints affected with rheumatiſm feel, in conſequence of their weakneſs, cold and dry, when the reſt of the body is in a warm and natural ſtate.—The urine is various; ſometimes turbid and high-coloured; ſometimes pale; and from the relaxation of the ſecretory veſſels of the kidneys, it is often ſeparated in too large a quantity. This ſpecies of diabetes is commonly attended with thirſt and great diminution of ſtrength.—If a woman who labors under chronic weakneſs becomes pregnant, ſhe is, from the relaxation of the womb, very liable to miſcarry. The os internum of the womb ſometimes yields to the preſſure made upon it in a ſtate of pregnancy, and a miſcarriage is the conſequence.—As the patient can only take a ſmall quantity of aliment, and digeſt it but in a very imperfect manner, the blood is much impoveriſhed, and the ſerum bears too large a proportion to the lymph and red globular part. It is ſometimes owing to this unnatural quantity of ſerum in the blood, that the ſurface of the body appears tinged with a yellowiſh color; for the extreme veſſels neceſſarily exhibit an appearance upon the ſur-

face, ſomewhat ſimilar to that of their contents. When this ſymptom occurs, without any obſtruction of the liver, the ſtools are of a proper color, and the paſſage of the bile is free.

The patient is often afflicted with want of ſleep. At other times, his ſleep is interrupted, unrefreſhing, and diſturbed with ſudden wakings and frightful dreams. The anxious patient imagines himſelf, during his ſhort and imperfect repoſe, to be ſometimes falling from a high precipice, to be ſuffering puniſhment for having committed the moſt horrid acts of injuſtice; or, by ſome unforeſeen misfortune, to be plunged with his whole family into the moſt diſtreſsful ſituation.

The organa virilia are in a weakened and relaxed ſtate. There is frequently a diſcharge of thick viſcid mucus from the urethra and veſiculæ ſeminales. The teſtes are affected with tranſient pains, and a rotatory motion. A ſmall quantity of ſemen proves too great a ſtimulus to the relaxed ſeminal veſſels, and conſequently ſomnia libidinoſa & emiſſiones nocturnæ are very frequent *. If the relaxation of thoſe parts be ſtill greater, evacuations of ſemen, ſine penis tentigine, occur at uncertain

* Pathol. Inſtit. Gaub. § 562.

tain times, which weaken the conſtitution as much as they depreſs the ſpirits.

The hemorrhoids are a troubleſome ſymptom in this complaint. A languid circulation, a relaxed ſtate of the hemorrhoidal veins, and a coſtive habit of body, together with the natural depending ſituation of thoſe veſſels in a looſe cellular membrane, favor the frequent occurrence of the piles. Sometimes there is only pain and ſwelling without any evacuation of blood. At other times the evacuation is conſiderable, and conduces not a little to haſten the fatal termination of the diſeaſe. In ſome caſes, nevertheleſs, the patient, if he previouſly labored under a venous plethora, finds a ſenſible relief in conſequence of a moderate diſcharge of blood from the hemorrhoidal veins.

Of all the parts of the body, the circulation of the blood through the vena portæ is the ſloweſt. For in diſtributing a certain proportion of blood through the liver, nature deviates from her ordinary courſe, and ſupplies the place of an artery by a vein, which divides itſelf into innumerable branches through the ſubſtance of that glandular body. It was neceſſary that the blood ſhould move on ſlowly,

in order to ſerve for the ſeparation of a ſufficient quantity of bile. But if the circulation through the liver be ſlower than is natural, obſtructions and biliary concretions are apt to occur *. In the advanced ſtages of chronic weakneſs theſe ſymptoms are not uncommon, accompanied with pain in the region of the liver. In this caſe a yellowneſs of the ſkin is obſervable, ariſing from an obſtruction of the biliary ducts and a reabſorption of the bile. The patient is coſtive, the ſtools are whitiſh, and the urine is high-coloured. As ſoon as theſe bilious ſymptoms appear, they are too often conſidered as the original diſeaſe, and the caſe is, without foundation, treated entirely as a jaundice. The biliary ſymptoms are only the conſequence of chronic weakneſs, and though they require a particular treatment, they are by no means to be regarded as the primary complaint.

In this relaxed ſtate of the general conſtitution, and particularly of the alimentary canal, worms frequently occur as a ſymptom of chronic weakneſs. The ſuperabundant quantity of mucus, lodged in the ſtomach and bowels, forms a convenient nidus for the riſe and encreaſe of the different ſpecies of worms. This ſymptom

* Pathol. Inſt. Med. § 515.

ſymptom occurs more frequently in children than in adults. In conſequence of an erroneous notion, that worms are the original complaint, and that the proper treatment is by purgative remedies, chronic weakneſs is often dangerouſly encreaſed, the conſtitution is greatly reduced, and, along with the worms, the patient is nearly deſtroyed. In this caſe the cure unfortunately proves far more dangerous than the complaint, which it was intended to remove.

In the progreſs of this diſeaſe the ſymptoms of hectic fever ſooner or later make their appearance. The ſtimulus of a ſmall quantity of food, particularly if it be of a heating nature, has a conſiderable effect on a weakened conſtitution. It excites the action of the heart and arteries, quickens the pulſe, and produces a fluſhing of the face, with a ſenſation of great warmth in the palms of the hands, and ſometimes in the ſoles of the feet. The febrile paroxyſm, which naturally occurs in the evening, is encreaſed. It generally comes on before midnight, and after having continued for ſome time, terminates in a copious flow of the perſpirable matter. It is ſometimes preceded with a regular cold fit. Quickneſs of pulſe, an unnatural

natural heat of the body, and a ſenſe of anxiety, are ſymptoms which prevail during this febrile affection.

The irritability of the ſyſtem encreaſes, and becomes a ſource of much uneaſineſs to the patient. The ſmalleſt ſurprize produces violent agitations both of the mind and of the body. An unexpected incident in even trivial matters will occaſion a general tremor of the nerves, and excite the periſtaltic motion of the ſtomach and bowels to ſuch a degree, as immediately to bring on vomiting or a diarrhæa. A ſlight application of unaccuſtomed cold has the ſame effect in exciting the action of the alimentary tube, increaſing its evacuation, and aggravating all the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs. The fall of a poker or the ſudden ſhutting of a door is often acutely felt, and produces a troubleſome emotion of the animal frame. The unexpected ſight of an intimate acquaintance diſorders the nervous ſyſtem. The depreſſion of ſpirits occurs more frequently and in a much higher degree. The ſalivary glands are ſometimes affected in ſuch a manner, that the ſaliva is ſecreted as copiouſly as if the patient was in a ſalivation from the uſe of mercury. The ſtomach is often ſo weak and irritable,

table, that even a ſmall quantity of food cannot be retained; it occaſions ſickneſs and vomiting. As the periſtaltic motion of the bowels is generally languid and weak, the body is uſually coſtive; but in ſome caſes of particular irritability, the periſtaltic motion is irregularly encreaſed, the aliment paſſes through the inteſtines in a crude ſtate, and the ſtools are looſe and frequent, occurring for the moſt part ſoon after the ſtomach is acted upon by the ſtimulus of freſh food. The contractions of the heart and arteries become weaker, quicker, and more irregular, and the patient is ſubject to frequent faintings. The exhalant veſſels, in the laſt ſtage of the diſeaſe, loſe their contractile power; nocturnal ſweats and a colliquative diarrhæa occur; ſerous fluids are ſometimes effuſed into the cellular membrane and cavities of the body; the legs, the hands, and the face ſwell, and various dropſical ſymptoms appear, attended with violent pains of the abdomen. Theſe hydropic affections ariſe from general weakneſs and relaxation of the ſyſtem, and are the laſt fatal marks of a broken conſtitution. Thus the patient, after an uncertain term of years, is exhauſted and deſtroyed.

Theſe

Theſe are the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs, carefully collected from a variety of caſes, which have fallen under my own obſervation. The facts here enumerated are taken from nature, and aſcertained by experience. The ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs occur in very different degrees, and I believe they are never all to be obſerved in the ſame patient. Some one part of the body is in general more afflicted with the diſeaſe than other parts. The head, the heart, the ſtomach and bowels, the kidneys, the womb, or the organa virilia, are frequently the principal ſeat of the complaint. In this caſe the patient is apt to overlook his leſs painful ſufferings, and to dwell chiefly on thoſe morbid affections, which he finds or which he thinks to be the moſt diſtreſſing. Being thus habituated to view his complaint as confined principally to a ſingle part, that part, by this very circumſtance, is apt to be more diſturbed in the performance of its functions *, and a fixed topical weak-

* Dr. Cullen and Dr. Fordyce are of this opinion. I was informed the other day by a learned and worthy gentleman, who was afflicted with a relaxation of one of the upper eye-lids, that whenever he thought moſt of his complaint, it proved the moſt troubleſome to him. I was acquainted too with a gentleman who was a great hypochondriac, and labored under chronic weakneſs, who was apt to have giddineſs in

weakneſs is induced. For the pernicious influence of an anxious mind may be extended not only to particular organs, but even to particular parts of the ſame organ.

in his head, palpitation of his heart, diſtention of his ſtomach, or uneaſineſs in his teſtes, according as he ſuppoſed one or other of thoſe parts to be morbidly affected.

THE CAUSES OF CHRONIC WEAKNESS.

SECTION II.

IT is probable that the immediate and PROXIMATE CAUSE of chronic weakneſs conſiſts principally in a want of nervous energy, in an encreaſed mobility of the nervous ſyſtem, and in a diminiſhed coheſion of the particles of matter which conſtitute the ſimple ſolids. The proximate cauſe, as here ſtated, ſeems to be confirmed by the ſymptoms of the diſeaſe; and indeed it conſiſts of facts, the knowledge of which is of the firſt importance in regulating the cure. The ſoftneſs and relaxation of the ſimple ſolids, the weakneſs

weakneſs and irritability of the moving powers, the dejection and timidity of the mind, are the natural conſequences of ſuch a morbid ſtate of the conſtitution. The mind and body being ſo intimately connected, the diſorders of the one greatly affect the health of the other. From this proximate cauſe too ariſe all the ſigns of languor and debility in the vaſcular ſyſtem and in the alimentary canal. The affections of the womb are readily accounted for upon the ſame view of the diſeaſe. From the emptineſs of the conſtitution, and the diminiſhed vigor of the circulation, the evolution of the uterine ſyſtem is imperfect, and a ſufficient congeſtion of blood in the uterine veſſels does not occur. Hence a want of the menſtrual evacuation at the period of life in which it uſually takes place, or a ſuppreſſion after it has made its appearance. The too copious and irregular diſcharges of the menſes ariſe from topical weakneſs and relaxation of the uterine veſſels. But it is needleſs to go further into the explanation of all the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs, which upon the principles here laid down are obvious in themſelves, to any one tolerably acquainted with the inſtitutions of medicine. We ſhall therefore proceed to the conſideration of the PREDISPOSING and OCCASIONAL

CAUSES of the complaint. The enumeration of theſe, and the method of treatment, will ſerve to illuſtrate our doctrine concerning the proximate cauſe. The occaſional cauſes are ſuch as weaken the nerves and relax the whole conſtitution, and the method of treatment conſiſts chiefly of the application of thoſe means, which are efficacious in reſtoring the enervated fibres to a ſtate of vigor.

Chronic weakneſs is an hereditary diſeaſe. Weak parents have often the misfortune to ſee a weak and ſickly offspring. Though the infant ſhould apparently thrive and flouriſh a while at its firſt entrance into life, yet, like a plant growing in too ſhallow a ſoil, it often droops and pines away before it arrives at a ſtate of maturity. Old and debilitated fathers, ſunk with the infirmities of luxury and debauch, can hardly expect to be bleſt with children whoſe conſtitutions are vigorous. The ſtamina of life are not of a durable kind, and the fruit will neceſſarily be imperfect. It is a melancholy reflection to a feeling mind, that the weakneſs and diſeaſes, which ariſe from indolence, ignorance, and imprudence, ſhould be entailed upon our poſterity.

A peculiar delicacy and tenderneſs of the animal fibres prediſpoſes to this diſeaſe. Thoſe who are born with ſuch fibres are injured by ſlight occaſional cauſes, and are more frequently afflicted with chronic weakneſs. Perſons with light hair, a very fine ſkin, and a fair complexion, have in general a great delicacy of bodily ſtructure. This temperament, like all others, is founded on the original ſtamina of life. It is very commonly attended with an irritable ſtate both of body and mind.

Too great fulneſs of blood diſtends the veſſels beyond their natural tone, and impairs in time the vigor of their contractile power. Nothing is more common than to ſee, in a courſe of years, the moſt healthful conſtitutions broken and deſtroyed from this ſingle cauſe. A miſerable train of ſymptoms, attended with great anxiety of mind and uncommon depreſſion of the vital powers, is ſometimes induced by plethora. This cauſe acts ſlowly, but its effects are generally certain, and it reduces the moſt vigorous conſtitutions to a ſtate of great debility and relaxation. The common cauſes therefore of plethora become indirectly the cauſes of chronic weakneſs. Full living is remarkably injurious to health, and continually proves the

the bane and miſery of thouſands. Exceſs of animal food has a powerful effect in bringing on the plethoric ſtate. For animal food is conſiderably more nutritious than vegetable, and therefore is improper to form the principal part of the diet of ſtrong people, who uſe little exerciſe. From neglect of this precaution, venous plethora in the decline of life is often induced, which is apt to be dangerouſly encreaſed by the ſuppreſſion of the menſes, the ſuppreſſion of the hemorrhoidal flux, or of any other uſual evacuation. Weakneſs of the conſtitution from plethora, in conſequence of full living, is of a very obſtinate nature, and extremely difficult to remove.

Neglect of exerciſe is another cauſe of chronic weakneſs, and it is as powerful as it is univerſal. Nature intended man to be active, and he cannot deviate from her laws without materially injuring himſelf. A moderate degree of muſcular motion is neceſſary for the due performance of the different functions of the body. Different degrees are requiſite for different conſtitutions. Even infancy and age cannot be preſerved in a ſtate of health without gentle exerciſe, proportioned to their ſtrength. In conſequence of the neglect of exerciſe enumerable

rable evils enſue. The nervous energy fails, digeſtion and nutrition are imperfect, the blood and other fluids are vitiated, the circulation is languid, the muſcular ſtrength is impaired, and the various ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs gradually come on.—Theſe ill effects are more certain if ſolitude be conjoined with indolence. Man is a ſocial creature, and the rational enjoyments of ſociety afford him one of the higheſt pleaſures in life. In ſolitude the patient is apt to brood over a ſlight indiſpoſition till he has magnified it into a dangerous complaint. Thus the mind becomes habituated to dwell upon the diſeaſe, which circumſtance indeed tends much to encreaſe it.—From theſe facts it is obvious that all thoſe profeſſions which lead to a ſedentary life are of an unhealthful kind. For ſuch is the ignorance or inattention of many, that they will indulge an indolence of diſpoſition as far as they are able, provided that indulgence does not interfere with what they call a prudential regard to their temporal intereſt and ſucceſs in life. They pay no attention to their health, till they have loſt that bleſſing for which nothing can compenſate. Some who have unhappily fallen into this erroneous practice, preſume even to cenſure the conduct of others who wiſely follow a different

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plan. They conſider them as negligent in their profeſſions. They forget that health is neceſſary to the ſucceſsful performance of buſineſs, and that moderate exerciſe is neceſſary to the preſervation of health. Fatal experience too often convinces them of their miſtake.

Sudden and violent exertions of ſtrength tend alſo to enervate the body. Over-diſtention and too ſevere action of the muſcular fibres proves very pernicious to the nervous ſyſtem. Nothing is more powerful in deſtroying the tone of the living ſolids, and inducing an obſtinate degree of weakneſs. For by this means the action of the ſtomach, the digeſtion of the aliment, and the proceſs of nutrition are greatly diſturbed. Severe exerciſe or labor diſorders the circulation, vitiates the quality of the fluids, diſturbs the ſecretions, produces copious ſweating, forces and weakens the exhalant arteries, and does great injury to the conſtitution. The lower claſs of people are very apt to run into theſe errors, and imprudently to deſtroy their health. But they ſhould know that all violent labor, and all endeavours to lift great weights, or in any way to exert their whole bodily ſtrength, are extremely dangerous and abſurd.

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Though ſleep is abſolutely neceſſary to the performance of the various functions of the animal economy, yet the nervous power is capable of ſuſtaining life for a certain time without it. Afterwards a new ſupply of nervous energy is required, which can only be obtained by ſleep. Want of ſleep deſtroys the tone of the nervous ſyſtem; it produces paleneſs, languor, coldneſs, indigeſtion, a weak circulation, and dejection of ſpirits.—From theſe facts it is obvious that all public routs, entertainments, and aſſemblies of every kind, at which the company keep late hours, and convert night into day, contribute greatly to the deſtruction of health. Nothing can in any meaſure compenſate the loſs of the natural hours of reſt, but the unnatural converſion of day into night.—It is the want of ſleep too that renders every profeſſion and employment unwholeſome, in which men are diſturbed at the uſual hours of reſt.

The compreſſion of any important organ is highly injurious to health, and is a common cauſe of general weakneſs. The different parts of the body are ſo exquiſitely adapted to each other, that health is the neceſſary reſult of the natural action of thoſe parts. Every buſineſs

ſineſs therefore that requires a particular poſture of an unwholeſome kind, and ſubjects the workman to compreſſion, is to be conſidered as a cauſe of chronic weakneſs, which is more or leſs powerful in proportion to the degree of compreſſion, and to the importance of the organ compreſſed. A moderate compreſſion, continued for a great length of time, will be productive of very pernicious effects. The poſtures of children, if not particularly attended to, are apt to be of an improper kind. They ſometimes make too frequent uſe of the ſame poſition, till they have produced a curvature of the ſpine. Strong ſtays are very unfit for children, and often occaſion crookedneſs and diſeaſe. Women who lace their ſtays in ſuch a manner as to be diſagreeably tight, compreſs the moſt important viſcera, and greatly injure their health. Dr. Hunter, in his excellent courſe of Anatomical lectures, gives inſtances of ſtomachs whoſe ſhape has been rendered unnatural by the compreſſion of ſtays. The unfortunate lady, who weakly ſacrifices her health to her vanity, will find to her great diſappointment that ſhe will not only loſe the real beauties of nature, which ſhe might otherwiſe have poſſeſſed, but will be afflicted with pains of the ſtomach and bowels, with heart-

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burn, acidity, indigeſtion, low ſpirits, obſtruction of the menſes, bilious complaints, diſorders of the lungs, relaxation of the nerves and many other troubleſome ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs.—The effects of this ſpecies of compreſſion, when a woman is pregnant, are ſtill more pernicious. I have known ſome women in this ſtate who have laced themſelves ſo tight as greatly to endanger their own lives, as well as the lives of their children. Sickneſs, want of appetite, indigeſtion, colic pains, drowſineſs, &c. are the frequent but ſmaller conſequences of ſuch imprudent practice during pregnancy.

Impure air has a very conſiderable effect in weakening the conſtitution. A conſtant ſupply of good freſh air to the lungs is neceſſary to health. The want of it is often attended with depreſſion both of ſtrength and ſpirits. The air of large towns is impregnated with ſmoke, putrid vapours, and various other impurities; and conſequently is by no means ſo ſtrengthening and refreſhing as country air. Hence we find numbers of people who ſuffer materially in their health, when they are under the neceſſity of living ſome time in the unwholeſome atmoſphere, which perpetually ſurrounds

the great metropolis of this iſland. Impure air is a cauſe of chronic weakneſs, which, tho' ſometimes ſlow, is always certain in its effects. Upon this principle it is evident, that all thoſe trades and employments where men breathe an air loaded with duſt, ſteam, acids, putrid or mephitic vapor, exhalations from noxious metallic ſubſtances, &c. may without heſitation be pronounced unwholeſome. For this reaſon the profeſſions of grinding corn, dreſſing flax, brewing, tanning, painting, working in lead mines, burning charcoal, preparing vitriol, &c. are found to weaken and diſorder the conſtitution. Moiſt air is relaxing, and weakneſs is obſerved to occur in a higher degree in wet ſeaſons and in low marſhy countries. The action of the air upon the human body in preſerving life ſeems not to be perfectly underſtood. Some have imagined that we receive a ſpirit of a peculiar nature from the air; but this is merely a conjecture. It is more certainly known that we throw off with the air a poiſonous matter from the numerous exhalant arteries of the lungs. We find that air, when it has once ſerved the purpoſes of reſpiration, extinguiſhes flame, and proves ſuddenly fatal to animals which breathe it. As the whole maſs of human blood circulates through the lungs,

a conſiderable quantity of this deleterious vapor is perpetually exhaling. Hence the air in all public places, where there is a large concourſe of people, is loaded with this noxious vapor, and conſequently unfit for anſwering fully the important purpoſes of reſpiration. Small rooms, when crowded with company, are ſoon filled with unwholeſome exhalations, unleſs the doors and windows be frequently opened to admit freſh air. To ſleep in a ſmall room with the curtains cloſe is, for the ſame reaſon, very unhealthful.—But it would be an endleſs taſk to point out all the ſources of impurity in the air. After theſe general remarks, it will not be difficult for any one to aſcertain many other particular inſtances of a ſimilar nature. We cannot however neglect in this place the opportunity of acknowledging the great advantages which may be derived to ſociety, from the uſeful experiments of the learned Dr. Prieſtley on the ſubject of air.

Too copious a flow of the milk impoveriſhes the blood, and diminiſhes the vigor of the conſtitution. Milk is found to bear a ſtrong reſemblance to the chyle. If the nutritious parts of the blood, inſtead of ſupplying nouriſhment to the body, paſs off in too large quantity by the ſecretion of the breaſts, thirſt, head-

head-ach, indigeſtion, loſs of appetite, decay of ſtrength, paleneſs, failure of ſight and waſting of the fleſh are the common effects. Theſe morbid appearances will more certainly take place in conſtitutions previouſly weak and delicate; for when women of relaxed fibres give ſuck for any length of time, a greater degree of weakneſs, accompanied with hectic fever, is ſometimes induced. Yet it is very improper and even dangerous for the ſecretion of the milk to be ſuddenly ſuppreſſed after delivery, by the raſh efforts of a miſtaken art.

Exceſs in venery is one of the moſt powerful cauſes of chronic weakneſs, and often induces a miſerable degree of the complaint. Paleneſs, languor, coldneſs, averſion to motion, loſs of appetite, diminution of ſight, head-ach, vertigo, indigeſtion, ſeminal weakneſs, tremor of the nerves, leanneſs, and pains in the back are the common conſequences of this cauſe. Immoderata ſeminis profuſio, non ſolum utiliſſimi humoris jactura, ſed ipſo etiam motu convulſivo, quo emittitur, frequentius repetito, imprimis lædit *. Great inequality of conſtitutional vigor between perſons in the married ſtate frequently gives riſe to this diſeaſe. To indulge in laſcivious ideas

* Pathol. Inſt. Med. § 562.

ideas and to run into a wanton exceſs of venery, is as miſerably ruinous of health as it is below the dignity of reaſon. Onaniſm proves the ſad deſtruction of many; for in conſequence of that pernicious practice, the organa virilia are affected with a moſt obſtinate ſpecies of weakneſs.

Too great heat relaxes and enervates the animal fibres. It is a moſt univerſal cauſe of chronic weakneſs. The chillneſs which occurs at the commencement of febrile diſorders, has led mankind to be too cautious in defending themſelves from the influence of cold, and too indulgent reſpecting the free application of heat. A great degree of warmth renders the body extremely weak and irritable, and very obnoxious to the action of cold.—The lungs are particularly injured by living in too warm an air. From this cauſe the patient, eſpecially if the cheſt be narrow or the lungs obſtructed with tubercles, is ſubjected to frequent attacks of the catarrh, to habitual winter-coughs, and to fatal conſumptions.—The influence of a moderate degree of cold is injurious to thoſe only, who are too much expoſed to a heated atmoſphere. All trades and employments, ſuch as making glaſs, working

ing in forges, cooking victuals, &c. which expoſe men to exceſſive heats, are very dangerous to health. The removal from a temperate climate into a very warm one, gives often a ſevere ſtroke to a good conſtitution, and contributes not a little to bring on the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs. Such a ſudden change of climate determines the blood powerfully to the ſurface of the body, and leaves the larger veſſels in a proportionable degree of emptineſs, which ſtate is accompanied with a ſenſe of debility. Hot rooms, ſtoves, large fires, and too many cloaths are perpetual enemies to health. Too much heat impairs the ſtrength of the nervous ſyſtem, diminiſhes the tone of the ſtomach, relaxes the ſimple ſolids, and deſtroys the contractile power of the cutaneous pores. It is very unwholeſome to be overloaded with bedcloaths. The heat of the body in that caſe is cloſely confined upon its ſurface, and ſweating is unnaturally promoted. The habit of ſweating, however induced, diſturbs the equal balance between what is taken into the body and what paſſes off by the different outlets. In health, the force of the heart and arteries is wiſely proportioned to the contractile power of the cutaneous veſſels. If, by exceſs of heat, the equilibrium be deſtroyed, a diſeaſed ſtate will

will neceſſarily follow.—The imprudent application of heat in the treatment of acute diſtempers, has been productive of violent ſweating, which, if it did not prove fatal, was always ſucceeded by great debility and relaxation.—The too frequent uſe of the warm bath relaxes the nervous ſyſtem and the muſcular fibres. The Bath waters are often extremely abuſed, and recommended in diſeaſes which they evidently encreaſe.—The various methods of applying vapor or warm water to the human body, as invented by Dr. Dominiceti, require the greateſt caution and judgment to regulate their uſe in the cure of diſeaſes. In many caſes ſo powerful a remedy may be employed with efficacy and ſucceſs; but an indiſcriminate application of it would certainly be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences to ſociety.

All thoſe cauſes which weaken the ſtomach, deſtroy eventually the tone of the whole ſyſtem.—Over-diſtention of the ſtomach occaſions great weakneſs in that organ. From this cauſe, its fibres loſe their ſtrength of contraction, the digeſtion of the aliment is impaired, the nutrition of the body is defective, the appetite fails, and the vigor of the conſtitution is deſtroyed. To load the ſtomach with too large a

quantity of food is extremely unwholeſome, and productive of various complaints. It is a common error, and ought to be carefully corrected. It is particularly hurtful when the aliment is of a firm texture, of a glutinous nature, of ſlow ſolubility, and conſequently of difficult digeſtion.—Hard drinking is a very frequent and fatal cauſe of weakneſs in the alimentary canal. Wine and other ſpirituous liquors, from their ſtimulant and ſedative powers, are capable of injuring, not only the ſtomach and inteſtines, but alſo the brain and nerves. Taken with too great freedom, they at firſt excite the action of the ſyſtem to an unnatural degree. This excitement is followed by weakneſs and depreſſion of ſtrength. To be frequently intoxicated is miſerably deſtructive of health, and to drink freely is a practice that can by no means be indulged with impunity.—We may therefore affirm, upon the whole, that a ſtimulating diet to a healthful conſtitution is unnatural and pernicious *. Full living and the too liberal uſe of generous fermented liquors encreaſe the quantity of the fluids, and induce plethora, which ſtate, as we have before ſaid, is a frequent and powerful cauſe of weakneſs. All high-ſeaſoned things are unwholeſome. They err greatly who

* Haller. Prim. Lin. p. 342.

who are of opinion that a man may indulge his appetite at pleaſure, if he obſerve but rules of moderation with reſpect to the quantity of his food. Pepper, muſtard, ginger, mace, and many other ſpices are too ſtimulating to be freely employed with ſafety to the conſtitution. The ſtomach, from their too liberal uſe, becomes accuſtomed to an unnatural ſtimulus, and by habit is rendered unable to perform its function without them.—The ſedative quality likewiſe of tea and coffee injures the tone of the ſtomach and weakens the nervous ſyſtem *. The heat of the water is alſo pernicious. If the water be hot, it hardens the fibres of the ſtomach and deſtroys their texture.

From the various excretory organs of the human body, a continual waſte both of ſolids and fluids takes place. The friction of the fibres one upon another alters the coheſion and diſpoſition of thoſe particles of matter, which conſtitute the human frame. A freſh ſupply therefore of ſolids and fluids is conſtantly requiſite, not only to aſſiſt the growth of the body, but to repair the loſſes which that body ſuſtains in performing the ordinary functions of life. If that ſupply be not properly

* Percival's Eſſays, vol. I. p. 129.—Ibid. vol. II. p. 128.

made, langour and weakneſs will enſue. A want of food, or food of an unwholeſome kind, muſt neceſſarily diſorder the conſtitution. Againſt exceſs of aliment, nature is provided with various means to relieve herſelf, but againſt the want of it ſhe has no reſource. The too frequent uſe of food which is putrid or ſalted is unwholeſome. Aliment of that nature vitiates the qualities of the blood, and renders it morbidly acrimonious and putreſcent. In conſequence of ſuch diet the ſcurvy of a moſt dangerous and putrid kind is induced*. The want therefore of a ſuitable quantity of freſh vegetables and unſalted meat, is properly included in the cauſes of chronic weakneſs. — With regard to diet in infancy, we may obſerve that the milk of a nurſe when in ſmall quantity is ſeldom good, and by no means fit for the nouriſhment of a child. The want of woman's milk at the beginning of life is of dangerous conſequence to the human ſpecies. If the infant be deprived of this natural food, we ſhall in vain ſeek for a ſubſtitute equally wholeſome. The child from the want of human milk will be imperfectly nouriſhed, its ſtomach and bowels will be diſordered, and the very foundation of its conſtitution will be ſhaken.

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* Lind on the ſcurvy.

The mind and body being ſo cloſely connected, the immoderate exerciſe of the firſt diſorders the latter. Exceſs of mental application exhauſts the nervous ſyſtem, and is a frequent and fatal cauſe of weakneſs. The conſtant exertion of the mind on any one branch of ſcience, is more injurious to health than an equal exertion on a pleaſing variety of ſubjects. The ſtudy of the abſtruſe ſciences, ſuch as mathematics, metaphyſics, and the like, has often a dangerous effect on the nervous ſyſtem. Studies of a lighter kind are more eaſily borne, but they ſhould not be purſued beyond the bounds of diſcretion. It happens unfortunately that mental application is generally accompanied with a ſedentary life. The mind, being wholly engroſſed with the object before it, forgets its alliance with the body, and ſeems vainly to fancy that it can exert itſelf without interruption, and without any loſs of time in preſerving the health of that mortal fabrick within which it is ordained to dwell. The error is often diſcovered when it is too late to remedy its conſequences. Thus the world is ſometimes deprived of its brighteſt luminaries, whoſe longer exiſtence in this life might have added dignity and happineſs to mankind. Corpulency and fulneſs of habit is unfavor-

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ble to a vigorous exercise of the mental faculties; and a weak constitution is by no means the richest soil for the cultivation of literature. A healthful body, whose vessels are neither too much oppressed with blood, nor too much contracted from the want of fluids, is the most desirable habitation for an active soul, that is intent on the improvement of knowledge, and on the service of mankind.—The divine, the philosopher, the lawyer, and the physician, who bestow particular attention on the professions in which they are engaged, and who study at the same time the useful and ornamental collateral branches of literature, are exposed to a powerful cause of chronic weakness. The practice of physic obliges the physician to join exercise to his mental labors. The profession of the law is extremely dangerous to a man of a weak constitution and of a sedentary disposition. His life is to be considered as a life of study, and therefore excess of study should be cautiously avoided.

Not only excessive labor of the mind is pernicious to the body, but various mental affections, such as grief, fear, and anxiety, are justly enumerated among the most powerful causes of chronic weakness. When the mind

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is alarmed by fear, tormented by hatred and envy, or diſtreſſed by grief and anxiety, the nervous energy is diminiſhed, and the whole ſyſtem is ſometimes thrown into violent agitations. The heart either ceaſes to move with its natural force, or falls into ſudden palpitations from the want of thoſe powers which would have given it a firmer motion. Reſpiration is generally retarded. The ſtomach is ſenſibly relaxed, and digeſtion greatly diſturbed. Such depreſſing paſſions of the mind are often ſucceeded with a miſerable degree of chronic weakneſs.—Even the anxiety, which ariſes from the ill humor and unkind treatment of others, is deeply felt by perſons of tender minds, and conſequently proves highly injurious to their bodily frames. Mankind, diveſting themſelves of all ſelfiſh and intereſted views, ſhould ſtudy one among another to promote harmony and good will, and to cultivate thoſe ſentiments of mutual reſpect and kindneſs, which, as they contribute to their comfort in life, contribute alſo to their health. It is not enough to avoid giving offence in matters of greater moment. The ſmaller cauſes of irritation to a mind of great ſenſibility are, when they frequently occur, very pernicious to health, and ought therefore to be guarded againſt

againſt by every one of an humane and liberal diſpoſition. From inattention to theſe ſimple maxims of life, one may ſee many perſons even of good ſenſe perpetually at variance about trifling matters, and who, by living in almoſt a continual ſtate of uneaſineſs, have greatly impaired the health of each other.

The unneceſſary and imprudent uſe of remedies is injurious to the conſtitution, and is a common cauſe of chronic weakneſs. This ſubject has been too much overlooked. I have in a late publication endeavoured to throw together ſome obſervations on the abuſe of medicine, with a view of promoting a more full examination into that copious and intereſting ſubject. For it is matter of ſerious complaint that the medical art is often exerciſed in ſuch a manner as to injure rather than to promote the health of the human ſpecies.—The unſeaſonable and injudicious uſe of the lancet is extremely deſtructive to health. Habitual bloodletting is productive of plethora*, and all its dangerous conſequences. It is a common practice, and is frequently eſtabliſhed without neceſſity. By this means thoughtleſs and ignorant people are led into error, and their conſtitutions

* Lect. on the Mat. Med. p. 31. Inſt: Pathol. Med. § 391.

ſtitutions accuſtomed to prepare more blood than is neceſſary for the purpoſes of life.—Sudorifics along with the hot regimen are unſkilfully employed in many diſtempers, both acute and chronic. Their effects and mode of operation are not always ſufficiently conſidered. This abuſe has been more remarkable in former times, when the art of medicine was involved in darkneſs and obſcurity. But its bad effects in thoſe times are continued down to the preſent enlightened age, and will in future ages be yet ſeverely felt by mankind.

The unſeaſonable employment of emetics and purgatives deſtroys the tone of the ſtomach and bowels. Vomiting and purging, frequently repeated, leave thoſe organs in a relaxed ſtate, the common conſequence of an unnatural excitement. The habitual uſe of evacuants is often enjoined without neceſſity. In particular caſes indeed both emetics and purgatives are indicated, and their uſe is important. If, for example, the ſtomach from indigeſtion be loaded with impurities, a gentle emetic ought not to be neglected; for any noxious matters, contained in that organ, are extremely deſtructive of its tone. A morbid degree of coſtiveneſs too is a frequent cauſe of debility in

the inteſtinal tube, and if it be not ſoon obviated, it is often followed with a ſevere fit of the colic.—But ſurely that practice is not to be commended which, by the indiſcriminate application of purgatives and emetics, relieves few and injures many. For if we deſtroy the tone of the alimentary canal, we unavoidably reduce the vigor of the whole conſtitution.

The unneceſſary and imprudent uſe of ſtimulants has alſo a powerful effect in diminiſhing the tone of the ſtomach and inteſtines. By this abuſe of medicine the action of thoſe parts is unſeaſonably excited, and their native vigor is exhauſted. Bitters and other ſtrengthening remedies are dangerous, when unſkilfully employed; and inſtead of reſtoring vigor to the conſtitution, they deſtroy its tone, and induce a ſtate of weakneſs. The long-continued employment of either ſtimulants or bitters is often productive of dangerous effects; for unleſs thoſe remedies be occaſionally diſcontinued, the ſymptoms of the diſeaſe will probably be confirmed by the very means which were intended to remove them.—Repeated courſes of mercurial medicines, eſpecially when imprudently inſtituted, are very prejudicial to health. The active preparations of mercury

mercury are extremely ſtimulating, and conſequently injurious to the ſtomach and bowels. Chronic weakneſs is frequently brought on by the unneceſſary and injudicious uſe of mercury in the treatment of the venereal diſeaſe. Mercury is an univerſal ſtimulant, but particularly adapted to encreaſe the cutaneous excretion, and to promote a diſcharge from the ſalivary glands. The active preparations, ſuch as calomel and the corroſive ſublimate, formed by the union of mercury with the mineral acids, are very apt to excite purging, and to run off by the inteſtinal tube. They are found therefore leſs certain in curing venereal complaints than the mercurial ointment *, the ſimple mercurial pill †, or the calcined mercury.

The improper uſe of ſedatives is very injurious to the ſtomach and nervous ſyſtem. Tobacco (which, though ſtimulant in its firſt operation, is afterwards ſedative) produces a waſte of ſaliva, an unnatural diſcharge of mucus from the noſtrils, tremors of the hands, want of appetite, indigeſtion, loſs of memory, and

* Fordyce's Elem. of Practice, p. 361, 364.

† Duncan's Obſervations on Mercury, p. 135.

even paralytic complaints‡. Opium, one of the moſt efficacious ſedatives, is often given imprudently, and when rendered habitual, debilitates the nervous ſyſtem, and becomes a powerful cauſe of weakneſs and irritability. I have in ſeveral inſtances known a great degree of debility and relaxation induced by the unſeaſonable uſe of opium.—It is a common error to employ heating expectorants in pulmonary complaints of an inflammatory nature, which remedies, by encreaſing the inflammatory ſtate, weaken and exhauſt the ſyſtem.—The medicines uſed to remove obſtructions of the menſes and to deſtroy worms, which are commonly called emmenagogues and anthelmintics, are often ſo injudiciouſly choſen and unſkilfully applied, as to cauſe a total deſtruction of health. They are frequently ſtrong in their own nature, and dangerouſly ſevere in their operation.—In like manner corroſives, antiſpaſmodics, emollients, antiſeptics, aſtringents, and many other ſorts of remedies are greatly abuſed, and by reducing the ſtrength of the ſyſtem, bring on chronic weakneſs.—From theſe few general facts reſpecting the abuſe of medicine, it is obvious that the practice of

‡ Theſe facts reſpecting tobacco are mentioned upon the authority of Sir John Pringle.

of this art requires ſtrong natural talents and particularly acute penetration; and it is equally obvious that great induſtry and an extenſive liberal education, are eſſentials in the character of every phyſician, who upon juſt ground hopes to acquit himſelf with honor in the diſcharge of ſo important an office.

The unnatural and imprudent treatment of pregnant and of lying-in women, is another common cauſe of this lingering and troubleſome diſorder, which fact neceſſarily leads me to make a few curſory remarks on that ſubject. The practice of midwifery has been attended with the moſt pernicious conſequences to ſociety. During a ſtate of pregnancy exerciſe has often been imprudently forbidden, and indolence has been encouraged. Various medicines have been employed without neceſſity, and without judgment. Evacuations have been too frequently inſtituted with an unhappy freedom.—During labor the patient, inſtead of being kept agreeably warm, has often been loaded with bedcloaths and ſmothered with heat. Strong caudle has been freely adminiſtered to women of an inflammatory habit, who have been unaccuſtomed to the uſe of ſpirituous liquors. By this means women, eſpecially thoſe of nervous and delicate conſtitutions, are ſtupified and exhauſted.

hauſted. The conſequences of this abuſe are pain, ſickneſs, fevers, floodings, and inflammations *.

The operations in midwifery have often been attempted without ſkill, and performed without dexterity. The practice of turning children in the womb and delivering by force, an operation far more ſerious than many ſeem to believe, has been too frequent, and in many caſes extremely dangerous and abſurd †.—The forceps, inſtead of preſerving life, has in numberleſs inſtances been made the rude inſtrument of deſtruction. The forceps makes a dangerous and unequal preſſure upon the child's head, which may prove very detrimental to its future health, and therefore ſhould never be thought of but in thoſe caſes where it can be employed with ſafety, and is abſolutely neceſſary to the preſervation of life.—After the delivery of the child, the placenta, or after-birth, has often been haſtily extracted, which practice, as we ſhall afterwards ſhew, was attended with the moſt dangerous conſequences.

Sweating too after delivery has been unfortunately promoted, which contributed largely to

* Dr. Mackenzie's Lectures on Midwifery.

† Dr. Hunter's Anatomical Lectures.

to the ruin of many vigorous conſtitutions. It was an unhappy method of treatment, and has been followed with fatal effects. Nothing could have favored its continuance for ſo long a period of time, but a very imperfect ſtate of knowledge in this branch of medicine. Though the patient happened to eſcape from ſuch injudicious practice without any dangerous complaint, yet her recovery was certainly retarded.—The diet of child-bed women has been generally improper. Labor is a natural action, and ought by no means to be conſidered as a diſeaſe. The patient deviates too much from her ordinary diet; ſhe is often forced to eat againſt her inclination; and thus the natural returns of appetite are prevented*. A very low diet is proper in ſome caſes, but it is found in many others to retard the recovery and to produce weakneſs.—If diſorders occur either during the time of labor, or after delivery, they have often been imprudently overlooked, or miſtaken, in caſes where they might have been eaſily aſcertained and happily removed. When the complaint is obvious, the treatment of it has frequently been committed to unſkilful perſons.—From ſuch practice in the art of mid-

* Dr. Young's Lectures on Midwifery.

midwifery, the concluſion is obvious that chronic weakneſs muſt be a common conſequence. Facts confirm this aſſertion, and too often the unfortunate mother, weak, irritable, and dejected, feels, eſpecially in her declining years, the bad effects of the abuſe of midwifery. It is happy for mankind, that in the preſent age vulgar prejudices are daily ſubſiding, that their abſurdity is fully expoſed to view, and that the practice of this uſeful and neceſſary art is undertaken by men of medical erudition.

Under this head we ſhall in the laſt place mention acute and chronic diſeaſes in general, as cauſes of chronic weakneſs; ſome of which we ſhall enumerate without much attention to method and arrangement.—Fevers, eruptive diſtempers, hemorrhages, or local inflammations, particularly if there be frequent returns of thoſe complaints, tend to induce a laſting weakneſs of the conſtitution. — The animal frame after a fever or an eruptive diſtemper may ſoon recover from the very great depreſſion of ſtrength which accompanied the diſeaſe; but ſtill a conſiderable time is required, before it perfectly attains its uſual degree of vigor. During the courſe of a fever there is a violent exertion of the animal powers, which greatly exhauſts

hauſts the ſyſtem. That exertion is a ſalutary effort of nature, favoring the removal of the complaint*. The action of the heart and blood veſſels is greatly increaſed. The pulſe is often frequent and full, and in that caſe denotes the vigor of the living powers. Nervous and putrid fevers, obſtinate intermittents, the miliary fever, the ſmall-pox, the worm-fever, and ſuch like maladies of long duration, bring on a ſtate of chronic weakneſs.—Sudden hemorrhages have a powerful tendency to induce the ſame effect. When a conſiderable quantity of blood is evacuated, a greater ſupply of nervous energy is required to contract the veſſels in ſuch manner, that their cavities may be properly adapted to their contents. From this cauſe there is a want of living power in other parts of the body. Frequent and ſmall hemorrhages in particular occaſion a great degree of debility and relaxation†. The hemorrhoids and copious menſtruation are powerful cauſes of this diſeaſe.—Local inflammations, producing violent irritation of the ſyſtem, are ſometimes attended with a remarkable depreſ-

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* See the Author's Diſſert. de febribus continuis medendis.

† Dr. Fordyce's Lectures on the practice of medicine.

ſion of ſtrength, and leave a great degree of chronic weakneſs. This effect more certainly takes place, when large evacuations of blood have been neceſſary to remove the inflammation, or when the inflammation has been of long continuance, or when, from the diſeaſe being miſtaken, proper evacuations of blood have been neglected. Hence chronic weakneſs is no unfrequent conſequence of pleuriſies and peripneumonies, of rheumatiſms, of gouty complaints, of phrenſies and other local inflammations.—The dyſentery, the cholera, the catarrh, and the humid aſthma are productive of general weakneſs. In theſe complaints there is often a ſymptomatic fever, with a conſiderable evacuation of mucus or of bile. In the dyſentery, there is a great obſtruction of the inteſtinal tube, which, if not removed by purgatives, may terminate fatally, or at leaſt bring on an obſtinate debility of the ſtomach and inteſtines. The cholera, when attended with violent vomiting and purging, leaves great weakneſs of the ſyſtem. The catarrh and humid aſthma are diſorders of the lungs, which, in conſequence of their frequency, their permanency, and improper treatment along with an injudicious application of heat, favor greatly the riſe and progreſs of chronic weakneſs.

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There

There are alſo many chronic diſeaſes of which general weakneſs is often an inſeparable attendant. For whether ſenſe and motion in ſuch caſes be injured,—or whether the habit of the whole body or of a great part of it be depraved, without any primary nervous complaint,—or whether the diſorder be more ſtrictly local, partis non totius corporis affectio *, the regular functions of nature are frequently interrupted, and the conſtitution is gradually weakened and exhauſted. — A greater or leſs degree of chronic weakneſs is induced by the apoplexy and the palſy, the tetany, epilepſy, convulſions, ſpaſmodic aſthma, colic, diabetes or hyſterical affection. — The ſame obſervation ſometimes holds good with regard to thoſe chronic complaints, in which the mind is ſo diſordered as to be deprived of the uſe of reaſon, that beſt and nobleſt gift of heaven. For in melancholy and madneſs not only the diſorder of the brain weakens the general ſyſtem, but imprudent treatment of thoſe unhappy maladies contributes not a little to the deſtruction of the patient's health. The unfortunate lunatic is often unneceſſarily deprived of the benefit of exerciſe and freſh air, and he is often treated with raſhneſs and ſeverity —

* Synop. Noſologiæ Methodicæ.

With regard to cahectic and local complaints, we may obſerve that the atrophy, fleſhy excreſcences, dropſical effuſions, viſceral obſtructions, ſcrophula, teething, worms, the repulſion of certain cutaneous eruptions, the jaundice, the ſcurvy, and the venereal diſeaſe, all frequently tend to bring on chronic weakneſs. Conſiderable evacuations of bile or of mucus, tho' unaccompanied with fever, have the ſame effect. Copious evacuations by ſtool, the fluor albus, a diſcharge from ulcers, and the gonorrhœa benigna, debilitate the ſyſtem. The bile and the ſecreted mucus contain a conſiderable proportion of the lymph of the blood, which upon juſt ground is believed to be the moſt nutritious part of that vital fluid. Upon this principle we can eaſily account for the weakneſs, which ariſes from great and continued evacuations of bile or of mucous matter.—The ſuppreſſion of the menſes from cold, from ſurprize, or from any other cauſe, diminiſhes the nervous energy and brings on weakneſs *. Such is the natural ſympathy which ſubſiſts between the different parts of the body, that the diſorders of the womb have a great influence upon the brain and nervous ſyſtem and depreſs their powers. Obſtruction of the menſtrual diſcharge is always attended

* Van Swieten Comment. in Aphor. Boerh.

attended with want of appetite, languor, and depreſſion; and thus that morbid affection, which is often a mere conſequence, becomes a powerful cauſe of chronic weakneſs.—In this place too ſeveral other diſeaſes might have been enumerated, ſuch as ruptures, dilatations of the heart and arteries, ſcirrhus and cancer, morbid affections of the urinary paſſages, of the womb and organa virilia, along with a great variety of other complaints to which mankind are ſubject, but which it is not neceſſary to mention; as a full diſcuſſion of this ſubject would be diſproportionate to the preſent work, and lead us too far into the conſideration of the cauſes of death.

After theſe remarks it may not be improper to obſerve that chronic weakneſs, although it is attendant on numberleſs chronic diſeaſes, ought not in ſuch caſes to be miſtaken for the original complaint, but conſidered merely as ſymptomatic. The treatment of the original complaint may ſometimes be very different from the treatment of chronic weakneſs, and yet if we remove the firſt, the patient will gradually recover from the latter. But if the primary affection were to continue, it would in many caſes be in vain to attempt the removal

of

of a ſymptom. Such practice is too common, but it is very defective. It is always unhappy when any one who is a general practitioner of phyſic, but without liberal and extenſive views of his profeſſion, has beſtowed his attention chiefly on a ſingle *complaint*, to which he is very apt to refer all ambiguous caſes, without ſufficiently inveſtigating their real nature and cauſes. It matters not what name be given to the complaint, whether it be called the gout, a latent eryſipelas, a nervous fever, obſtructions of the viſcera, or a latent miliary eruption. Phyſicians ſhould be warped by no prejudices, but be impartially ſtrenuous in aſcertaining the different diſeaſes of the human body, and in applying the moſt ſucceſsful methods of cure.

DISTINCTION

DISTINCTION and PROGNOSTIC

OF

CHRONIC WEAKNESS.

SECTION III.

HAVING given a full enumeration of the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs, it is not neceſſary to dwell long upon the DISTINCTION of the diſeaſe. It would be difficult for any one who underſtands the nature and hiſtory of this complaint, and who is acquainted with the general doctrine of acute and chronic diſorders, to miſtake the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs. But for the ſake of thoſe who may not have had ſufficient opportunities of acquiring the principles of their art, it may not be improper to make a few obſervations on the diſtinction of this diſeaſe.—We have mentioned obſtructions of the menſes, hemorrhoids, calculous concretions in the biliary ducts, dropſical effuſions, and

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ſome other affections, as ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs, although they frequently conſtitute original complaints. But the diſtinction of them as ſymptomatic or primary, is of the utmoſt importance with reſpect to the cure; for the remedies proper to be employed, are often extremely different. The phyſician therefore ſhould carefully inquire, whether chronic weakneſs was ſubſequent to thoſe other morbid affections, or whether it exiſted before them. He ſhould endeavour likewiſe to aſcertain the particular cauſes of particular diſeaſes. He ſhould ſtudy not only their general progreſs, but alſo the manner in which they firſt made their appearance. By this means he will eaſily know in what point of view thoſe morbid affections ought to be conſidered. If they precede chronic weakneſs, they probably conſtitute the original complaint. If chronic weakneſs firſt took place, and they followed as conſequences, they are clearly to be regarded as ſymptomatic. The cauſes of obſtructions of the menſes, of the hemorrhoids, of calculous concretions and dropſical tumors, are too many and various to be ſeparately examined into, and enumerated in this place. Nor can we enter with propriety into the conſideration of the ſymptoms of thoſe indiſpoſitions. But the knowledge of ſuch particulars is uſeful in

diſtinguiſhing, whether thoſe morbid affections are primary or ſymptomatic.

Weakneſs is the predominant ſymptom of palſy, but it is weakneſs attended with diminiſhed ſenſibility of the moving fibres. A morbid ſtate of irritability, on the contrary, accompanies chronic weakneſs. Palſy is often partial, chronic weakneſs is always general. The firſt frequently comes on ſuddenly; the laſt is gradual in its attack, and neceſſarily a work of time. Palſy is often the conſequence of an apoplectic fit. An apoplexy may contribute to the production of chronic weakneſs, but this complaint ſeldom or never ariſes from that cauſe alone.

The hypochondriac diſorder is frequently miſtaken for chronic weakneſs. In ſome caſes the miſtake is of little moment, but in others it is extremely pernicious. The nature and proper treatment of the hypochondriac affection ſeems not to be generally underſtood. Dr. Cullen was the firſt who publicly taught the true doctrine of the complaint. The hypochondriac diſeaſe is commonly ſuppoſed to be weakneſs, attended with timidity and dejection of ſpirits, without regard to the peculiar temperament of the patient. But Dr. Cullen defines it—In tempe-

ramento melancholico dyſpepſia, cum languore, torpore, metu, et mœſtitia. This complaint, if it take place in a relaxed conſtitution, is comprehended under chronic weakneſs; for the ſymptoms and the treatment are the ſame. But if it occur in a perſon whoſe fibres are morbidly rigid, it is different in its nature, and requires a different method of cure. The ſtrengthening remedies, uſeful in one caſe, are ſometimes found hurtful in the other. They increaſe the rigidity of thoſe fibres, which are already too rigid, and conſequently aggravate the ſymptoms of the diſeaſe. Relaxant medicines, warm baths, and mineral waters of a ſimilar virtue, are moſt ſerviceable in this caſe. By ſuch means I have ſeen ſeveral patients relieved in this ſpecies of the hypochondriac complaint, who had taken a variety of tonic remedies to little purpoſe. Rigidity is more apt to occur in the melancholic temperament than in the ſanguine. The melancholic temperament is diſtinguiſhed by black hair, a black eye, and a dark complexion, with a mind ſlow to anger, but ſteady in its reſentment. The ſanguine temperament is the reverſe. A fair complexion and an irritable mind are two of its principal characteriſtics. To diſtinguiſh accurately between laxity and rigidity, (a diſtinction

of

of the utmoſt importance) the practitioner ſhould not only attend to the temperament and particular ſymptoms of the complaint, but alſo to the nature and action of the cauſes. For if the cauſes tend to induce a rigid ſtate of the fibres, rigidity may juſtly be ſuſpected; but if the cauſes be ſuch as relax the conſtitution, they afford a preſumptive proof of relaxation and want of tone.

The hyſterical affection is often attended with all the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs. But it is diſtinguiſhed from this diſeaſe by the occurrence of fits, with the ſenſation of a ball in the throat, ariſing from a ſpaſmodic affection of that part which ſometimes threatens ſtrangulation. Convulſions, and a temporary ſtupor, are frequently attendant on the hyſterics, a complaint in which the ſyſtem generally labors under a morbid ſtate of mobility. Indigeſtion, heartburn, flatulency, acidity, colic pains, palpitations of the heart, a quick reſpiration, a copious diſcharge of pale urine, timidity, changeableneſs of mind and dejection of ſpirits, are ſymptoms that are common to both diſeaſes. If theſe caſes are miſtaken, the practice of courſe is erroneous. For if chronic weakneſs be conſidered as an hyſterical affection, ſtimu-

lant and antiſpaſmodic remedies are apt to be employed, and the moſt effectual means of cure by reſtoring the ſtrength of the conſtitution are overlooked or diſregarded.

Chronic weakneſs, when accompanied with hectic ſymptoms, is frequently miſtaken for that ſpecies of low nervous fever, which affects the patient for a conſiderable length of time, without ever ariſing to any great degree of violence. I have ſeen this accident happen more than once, and the method of treatment which was adopted was ſo oppoſite to the complaint, that the conſequences were highly dangerous. The patients, who labored under chronic weakneſs, were imprudently confined to their rooms, and put on a courſe of heating antiſpaſmodics and ſudorifics along with the hot regimen. By this means the nervous energy was exhauſted, and a ſudden relaxation of the ſyſtem induced. The irritability of the body was rendered ſo great as to exhibit appearances of an alarming nature. The diſtinction of theſe diſorders is to be made, not from viewing ſuperficially the common ſymptoms, ſuch as languor and wearineſs, loſs of appetite, pain in the head, dejection of ſpirits, &c. but from carefully conſidering the patient's conſtitution and temperament,

—his

—his age, ſex, habit, and way of life,—the morbid cauſes to which he has been ſubjected—the ſeaſon of the year, and the prevailing epidemic—the ſymptoms which appeared at the firſt commencement, and during the progreſs of the complaint, along with the nature, permanency, and regularity of thoſe ſymptoms. The application of theſe general obſervations may be eaſily made, by comparing the hiſtory of chronic weakneſs with the hiſtory of a low nervous fever. A low nervous fever, for inſtance, is ſlow in its attack, when contraſted with the violence of an inflammatory or of a putrid fever; but it comes on much more ſuddenly than chronic weakneſs. Chronic weakneſs is ſeldom or never attended with a hectic fever at its beginning, but febrile ſymptoms neceſſarily occur at the very firſt attack of a low nervous fever. In this latter diſeaſe, the depreſſion of ſtrength and languor of countenance are more remarkable, and the febrile ſymptoms have a more regular appearance.

Chronic weakneſs is often ſuppoſed to be a latent gout, or, in the common phraſe, a gout lurking in the conſtitution. From this error remedies are employed at random, which counteract each other, weaken the conſtitution, and give

give ſtrength and duration to the original diſeaſe. I have known, for example, heating ſudorifics and ſtimulating cordials, in conſequence of this miſtake, employed in chronic weakneſs to ſuch exceſs, as abſolutely to exhauſt and ſtupify the patient. But in order to diſtinguiſh chronic weakneſs from the gout imperfectly formed, the practitioner ſhould remember, that the "gout is an hereditary diſeaſe, much connected with a peculiarity of temperament with which men are born, and which is founded on the original ſtamina of life, communicable from father to ſon." He ſhould remember that, as Dr. Sydenham has juſtly obſerved, "the gout generally attacks perſons of advanced age, often not appearing till the thirtieth or thirty-fifth year, which may be conſidered as the meridian of life. If this diſtinction of the gout, drawn from the time of its attack, be leſs characteriſtic in the preſent age than it formerly was, it affords one evident proof among many others, of degeneracy of conſtitutional vigor." The practitioner ſhould recollect that the * "gout may attack men of every ſize and temperament; but it has been obſerved to be particularly partial to thoſe of a large ſize, of a full habit, of the ſanguine phlegmatic or ſanguine melancholic temperament,

* Obſervations on the Abuſe of Medicine.

perament, with a peculiar coarſeneſs of the cuticle." He ſhould conſider that "the gout is more common to men, and ſeldom attacks females; unleſs being born with the temperament ſtrongly marked, they have been more than ordinarily ſubject to its cauſes." He ſhould remember too, that when "the gout has once made its appearance, even in an irregular form, it leaves the patient after ſome time, and then it generally recurs;" whereas chronic weakneſs, if neglected, advances ſlowly and gradually on, till the patient is deſtroyed. From theſe circumſtances relating to the hiſtory of the gout, together with the greater ſuddenneſs of the invaſion, the irregularity of the ſymptoms, and the nature and action of the cauſes, the practitioner will eaſily diſtinguiſh that diſeaſe at an early period, and not raſhly confound it with chronic weakneſs.

The pyroſis, the chloroſis, and weakneſſes of the ſtomach, often conſtitute a part of this complaint. The pyroſis, called in Scotland the waterbraſh, is a pain in the region of the ſtomach, attended with an eructation of a watery inſipid, or acrid humour. It is a ſymptom of many diſeaſes, and particularly of thoſe in which the ſtomach is affected. Its cauſes and nature are

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not difficult to be aſcertained.—The chloroſis is generally no other complaint than chronic weakneſs. If it is to be conſidered as a diſtinct diſeaſe, its only characteriſtic ſymptom is the deſire of eating certain things, ſuch as chalk, earth, ſand, &c. which afford not fit nouriſhment to the human frame. The chloroſis is a diſorder which occurs in both ſexes, though it is more frequent among females, and has generally, but improperly, been confined to them alone. I have ſeen caſes in which it has appeared in the male ſex, and I can add likewiſe the authority of Dr. Cullen in confirmation of the ſame fact.—Weakneſs of the ſtomach forms an important part of the hiſtory of chronic weakneſs. When it conſtitutes a primary diſeaſe, the following is its character as given by Dr. Cullen. Ventriculi functio idiopathice turbata, per anorexiam, nauſeam, vomitum, inflationem, ructum, ruminationem, cardialgiam, gaſtrodyniam, et alvum plerumque aſtrictam, indicata. But it ſeldom appears as an original diſeaſe, unattended with the ordinary ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs. It is very often a ſymptomatic affection in chronic complaints.

Before we proceed to the method of treatment, it is neceſſary to conſider that part of chronic

chronic weakneſs which is called the prognoſtic, and relates to the judgment made concerning the future event of the complaint. It is the buſineſs of the phyſician, not only to aſcertain and cure diſeaſes, but alſo, from a juſt view and compariſon of circumſtances, to foretel, if poſſible, what will be their future termination, either when the patient is left to nature, or when he is aided by the art of medicine. He does not deſerve the name of a phyſician, who is not particularly ambitious to know with great exactneſs the laws of the animal economy in a ſound ſtate, as well as the general doctrine of diſeaſes. Without an extenſive knowledge of the inſtitutions of medicine, founded not on mere idle ſpeculation but on matters of fact, it is abſolutely impoſſible to aſcertain with any degree of probability the termination of a complaint. Ignorant of the doctrine of health and life, the practitioner can only draw weak and imperfect concluſions relative to the doctrine of diſeaſes. Without much medical erudition he may form a ſuperficial judgment, and ſolemnly prognoſticate death when his patient is dying; but he will be unable to inquire into thoſe nice diſcriminating circumſtances, and to make with diſcernment thoſe juſt reflections, which mark and diſtinguiſh the character of

phyſicians. The prognoſtic of chronic weakneſs muſt be aſcertained from the conſideration of many particulars; the principal of which I ſhall endeavor to enumerate.

The temperament of the patient is an object of importance in regulating our judgment concerning the future tendency of the complaint. If, for example, the conſtitution be purely phlegmatic, and the natural efforts of the ſyſtem to reſtore health be weak and imperfect, the recovery is tedious and uncertain. Where nature can do little towards her own preſervation, the aſſiſtance of art often proves inefficacious. If the patient, on the contrary, be of a chearful diſpoſition, and of the ſanguine temperament, and if the ſalutary efforts of nature be regular and ſtrong, there is great reaſon to hope for a quick recovery. In proportion as the ſtamina of life are more vigorous, the operations of nature are more powerful and effective.—If the patient be of the melancholic temperament, and his mind of a gloomy caſt, he is liable to be dejected and alarmed with trivial incidents. This diſpoſition of mind is a great hinderance to the removal of the complaint. Dejection of ſpirits, and a gloomy turn of thought, are the moſt frequent and ſevere

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in the melancholic habit; for in habits of a different ſort, ſuch an unfortunate ſtate of mind does not riſe to ſo high a degree, nor is it of ſo durable a nature.—But this ſubject is at preſent involved in great difficulties. For different temperaments are combined together in different perſons, and the prognoſtic in this particular muſt be regulated by a variety of circumſtances. The doctrine of temperaments is capable of much improvement. While phyſicians conſidered temperaments as founded on a particular ſtate and condition of the fluids, it was impoſſible that they ſhould ever arrive at any certain knowledge in this intereſting ſubject. But ſince they have now begun to make their reſearches more general, and to inquire likewiſe into the nature and properties of the living ſolids, their ſucceſs will be greater, and their knowledge of the temperaments more accurate and ſubſtantial.

If the mind be unſteady, it is an unfavorable ſign. If the patient wants reſolution, he will be unable to befriend himſelf; and when a man is conſtitutionally his own enemy, it is an unthankful office to attempt to convince him of his errors. He will perhaps not be able to avoid the cauſes of his diſorder; or, if

he be prudent for one week, he will in the next be wavering in his reſolutions, and in the third he will fall again into his former miſconduct. With regard to remedies and regimen, if he do not find great and immediate relief, he will reject the firſt as unpalatable or uſeleſs, and the latter he will regard as too ſevere a reſtraint upon his actions. Thus, from the want of perſeverance, he will not reap that advantage from the art of medicine, which a more ſteady man would certainly have done.

If chronic weakneſs be complicated with chronic rheumatiſm, with great irritability of the lungs and an habitual cough, or with any other chronic indiſpoſition, which either in ſome meaſure does or is improperly thought to preclude the benefit of freſh air and exerciſe, the caſe is often miſmanaged, the cure is retarded, and the prognoſtic is unfavorable. In like manner, if the removal of chronic weakneſs be attempted at that critical period of female health, when the natural courſes are diſappearing, the method of treatment is more intricate and leſs ſucceſsful.

Chronic weakneſs, like moſt other diſeaſes, is more difficult of cure in patients who are advanced

vanced in years, than in thoſe who have the advantage of youth on their ſide. The animal body is ſo framed by nature, that, in the early periods of life, it gradually increaſes in height and breadth, till the evolution of all its parts be compleated, and its fibres can admit of no further diſtention without endangering health. At thoſe youthful periods, a greater quantity of aliment is neceſſarily taken into the body than paſſes off by the different outlets. When man has arrived at the meridian of his days, the balance of the ſyſtem is more equally maintained, and the bodily machine, in the eyes of the anatomiſt, is conſtructed upon ſo perfect a plan as to ſeem capable of continuing through ages without the ſmalleſt appearance of change. We are only made acquainted with the infirmities of years, and the natural diſſolution of the human frame, by facts and experience. For ſo it happens in the ordinary courſe of things, that the body, after having attained its higheſt pitch of perfection, and continued in that ſtate for ſome time, begins gradually to decay. The powers of nature fail, the nervous energy is diminiſhed, the fluids are leſs nutrient and contain a larger proportion of earthy particles, innumerable blood-veſſels are obliterated, and the fibres be-

become more rigid *. From theſe facts, it is obvious what judgment is to be formed from the age of the patient with reſpect to the termination of the diſeaſe. If the patient be old, the complaint too is generally of long ſtanding, and more firmly rooted in the conſtitution.

If, along with general weakneſs, there be partial weakneſs to a conſiderable degree, it is an omen of an unfavorable kind. Partial weakneſſes are extremely difficult to remove. Remedies are not employed with equal ſucceſs, when a diſeaſe is attended with any local affection. In ſome caſes of this nature the moſt efficacious means of cure cannot be uſed. Hence the danger is always increaſed, when the mind is remarkably weak, timid, and apprehenſive; when the contractions of the heart are feeble; when the function of the ſtomach is particularly diſturbed, and digeſtion much impaired; when the bowels have loſt their tone; or when the kidneys are relaxed, and there is an habitual evacuation of an unnatural quantity of urine. The ſame obſervation is alſo juſt, if there be great weakneſs of the ſeminal

* Vid. Haller. prim. Lin. p. 502.

minal ducts, attended with a copious diſcharge of the ſeminal fluid, or if the uterus be in a very relaxed ſtate, which is indicated by frequent miſcarriages, by the fluor albus, and a morbid evacuation of blood from the uterine veſſels.

If chronic weakneſs appears unattended with any viſceral obſtruction, the prognoſtic is more favorable. But if any of the viſcera be diſeaſed, the danger of the complaint is greatly increaſed. A ſallow unwholeſome countenance, which is eaſily diſcoverable by thoſe who are converſant among the ſick, is one of the moſt certain ſigns of viſceral obſtructions. In ſome caſes ſuch a morbid ſtate may, in its advanced ſtage, be aſcertained by a careful examination of the part affected, whether it be the liver, the ſpleen, the womb, the ovary, or the myſenteric glands.

To judge rightly of the termination of the diſeaſe, it is neceſſary to conſider the profeſſion of the patient and his condition in life. If the profeſſion be unwholeſome and the patient be obliged to continue it, a powerful cauſe of the diſeaſe is conſtantly applied, and its effects will undoubtedly be conſiderable. This is an unfor-

unfortunate caſe, but it is one which frequently occurs. I might here have enumerated thoſe profeſſions which are deemed pernicious to health, but from the general rules which have been before advanced, particular caſes may eaſily be aſcertained, and juſt inferences deduced from juſt premiſes. Where the fortune and condition of the patient is ſuch, that he is able to relinquiſh his profeſſion, or to follow ſome other of a more ſalutary kind, there is a much fairer proſpect of his recovery. Affluent circumſtances too give a man an opportunity of enjoying advantages with reſpect to the means of recovering his health, which people of low condition cannot always procure. A man of fortune may inhabit any part of the globe, he may have the advice and regular attendance of the ableſt phyſicians in practice, and enjoy every benefit of proper diet, of change of air, of exerciſe and amuſement.

The practitioner ſhould carefully weigh the cauſes of the diſeaſe. The obſtinacy of the caſe is often dependent on the ſeverity of the cauſe. I have given a full enumeration of the predisponent and occaſional cauſes of chronic weakneſs; and, from what has been advanced on that ſubject, the reader will in a great meaſure

perceive

perceive their different degrees of power. He will find that the effects of ſome are ſmall and inconſiderable in compariſon of the effects of others.—If the operation of a cauſe be ſudden, and though ſevere, yet not in exceſs, the effects of ſuch a cauſe, after its removal, are ſeldom of ſo durable a nature, as when the operation of a cauſe has been moderate, but continued for a great length of time. Frequent and ſlow hemorrhages, repeated fits of the gout or rheumatiſm, and ſuch like lingering complaints, generally induce a more obſtinate degree of chronic weakneſs than a fever or an inflammation of the lungs. If a long-continued ſtate of plethora has, by over-diſtention of the veſſels, exhauſted the tone of the ſyſtem, the weakneſs is dangerous and extremely difficult to remove. This cauſe, ariſing from indolence and intemperance, is often found in a courſe of years to enervate and reduce the ſtrongeſt conſtitutions. The tone of the nervous and vaſcular ſyſtem becomes irreparably injured.—Exceſs in venery, continued for many years, induces a violent ſtate of weakneſs. This cauſe often acts in a moſt powerful manner. The paſſion which ſubſiſts between the ſexes is extremely difficult to be reſtrained, and therefore is frequently indulged

without reaſon and without limitation. When the vigor of the body is exhauſted, the mind is ſtill apt to purſue its favorite haunts, eager in queſt of pleaſures which it can no longer enjoy.—If neglect of exerciſe, putrid air, unwholeſome food, exceſs of heat, too ſevere exerciſe either of body or mind, the unneceſſary uſe of medicines, &c. have been the cauſes of chronic weakneſs, the diſeaſe, if taken in time, is of a more remediable nature.—Frequent labors, improperly managed, bring on partial weakneſſes, and produce a troubleſome and dangerous degree of the complaint, which, as was before obſerved, is ſtrongly perceived when the patient is in the decline of life.—If chronic weakneſs occur as a ſymptom of any other chronic diſeaſe, the prognoſtic muſt in a great meaſure be drawn from the nature, cauſes, and progreſs of the primary affection.

Another important object of conſideration, reſpecting the doctrine of prognoſtics, is the nature, duration, and violence of the whole diſeaſe. If the relaxation of the muſcular fibres be great, if the nervous ſyſtem be extremely irritable and exhauſted, if the tone of the ſtomach be deſtroyed, attended with loſs of appetite, indigeſtion, pains, ſickneſs and vomiting, the caſe

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is truly alarming. To theſe ſymptoms we may add others of a moſt unfavorable kind, ſuch as a weak circulation, palpitations of the heart, fainting, a defect of nutrition, paleneſs and emaciation, reſtleſs and watchful nights, a ſallow bloated countenance, cold ſweats, relaxation of the womb and uterine diſcharges of blood, impotency and a defect of the venereal appetite, obſtructions of the viſcera, jaundice, hectic fever, lethargy, anaſarcous ſwellings and other dropſical ſymptoms. Theſe are among the fatal forerunners of diſſolution. Yet there are caſes extant in which many of the moſt dangerous ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs were preſent, and which nevertheleſs have admitted of great relief. I knew a young woman afflicted with chronic weakneſs to a high degree, complicated with tubercles in the lungs, an obſtinate cough, obſtruction of the menſes, hyſterics, a ſallow unwholeſome countenance, and general hydropic ſwellings of her face, arms, legs, and abdomen; and yet, by exerciſe, regimen, and remedies, properly adapted to her caſe, ſhe recovered her health.—But if the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs occur in a milder form, if the conſtitution appear to have ſome vigor remaining, if the viſcera be ſound, and if the patient will prudently ſubmit to follow thoſe rules which

are preſcribed for his welfare, there is the greateſt reaſon to hope for ſucceſs. Yet, before a cure can be compleated, the conſtitution muſt be greatly changed, and therefore a ſudden reſtitution of health is not to be expected. In many caſes, where health cannot be perfectly reſtored, it may be greatly improved. Between the moſt vigorous and the moſt exhauſted ſtates of the conſtitution, there are many intermediate degrees of health; bleſt with which, men may attain to a good old age, and paſs their lives with happineſs to themſelves, and with benefit to ſociety. An improving appetite, a ſlower and ſtronger pulſe, together with a gradual increaſe of bodily ſtrength, are among the moſt favorable ſymptoms of returning health.

THE

THE METHOD OF CURE IN CHRONIC WEAKNESS.

SECTION IV.

HAVING conſidered the ſymptoms, cauſes, diſtinction, and prognoſtic of chronic weakneſs, we come now to the METHOD OF CURE. This conſtitutes the moſt important part of the ſubject, and therefore ought to be diſcuſſed with great accuracy and attention. Having had frequent opportunities of treating this diſeaſe, I ſhall endeavor to give in detail that method of cure, which has been found by experience to be ſucceſsful.

The indications of cure which we ſhall lay down are three.

The

The firſt is to avoid the occaſional cauſes.

The ſecond, to obviate particular ſymptoms that aggravate the complaint. And,

The third, to reſtore the tone and vigor of the ſyſtem.

The rational practitioner will neceſſarily have in view thoſe three curative indications. In delivering the method of treatment, we ſhall endeavor without repetition to follow a regular order, as far as is conſiſtent with the nature of the ſubject. The indications above-mentioned, although they are as few and ſimple as poſſible, will, it is hoped, be found ſufficiently extenſive.

INDICATION I.

The occaſional cauſes of the diſeaſe are to be cautiouſly avoided. The obſervance of this rule is of the utmoſt importance to the ſucceſsful treatment of the complaint. No remedies will be found efficacious while the cauſes, which firſt brought on the indiſpoſition, continue to act. We ſhall therefore take notice of ſome of the principal occaſional cauſes; but after

after the remarks which we have already made on that ſubject in a preceding part of the eſſay *, it will be needleſs to enlarge fully on this indication.

We have ſaid that acute and chronic diſeaſes are often cauſes of chronic weakneſs.—With regard to the prevention of fevers and inflammations, we ought to avoid contagion, human effluvia, and imprudent expoſure to cold. This caution is particularly proper when the body is heated by exerciſe, or weakened by luxury and debauch, and conſequently more ſubject to be affected by thoſe moſt powerful cauſes of fevers and inflammations. Cold alone is able to excite inflammatory fevers, whether pure or attended with local affections. Nervous and putrid fevers are produced by human effluvia and contagion. Putrefaction increaſes the virulence of thoſe infectious vapors, which often exiſt in great abundance, and are of a very malignant nature, in jails, hoſpitals, workhouſes, and all other confined places crouded with poor, who pay little regard to the cleanlineſs and ventilation of their houſes. When any of thoſe diſeaſes occur, they ſhould not be careleſsly

* Vid. p. 21.

leſsly neglected, or committed to the hands of ignorance. The judicious application of remedies, at the beginning of a complaint, is of the utmoſt conſequence to its ſucceſsful termination. The imprudent uſe or the neglect of them at that period, may prove ſo dangerous as to render all future attempts to relieve abortive and unſucceſsful.—The ſame obſervations are true in general with regard to eruptive diſtempers, which are brought on by cold and contagion, and increaſed by the virulence and activity of putrid and human effluvia.—Hemorrhages too, morbid evacuations of mucus, bilious complaints, ſuppreſſions of the menſes, and numberleſs caſes of chronic diſeaſes which bring on chronic weakneſs, require the application of their own peculiar preventive and curative means, but preſent far too wide a field to be made the immediate objects of our inquiry †.

. Full living is a dangerous cauſe of chronic weakneſs, for it induces plethora and overdiſtention of the blood-veſſels. In this ſtate of body,

† Vid. Obſerv. on the Abuſe of Medicine, in which there are many facts relating to this ſubject.

body, blood-letting, in proportion to the patient's ſtrength, may be occaſionally required, eſpecially when the pulſe is hard and contracted. Small bleedings even are frequently ſerviceable; for when the conſtitution is weak, a ſmall quantity of blood will over-load it, and bring on the ſymptoms of plethora. This evacuation, however, ſhould be uſed with great caution; for the loſs of a large quantity of blood ſeldom or never agrees with the patient, but often exhauſts and reduces him beyond conception. The habitual uſe of the lancet will inevitably fruſtrate the intention of the phyſician, and increaſe the malady. Temperance in diet, therefore, is to be ſtrongly recommended. The aliment, as we ſhall afterwards prove, ſhould be of a plain ſort, and taken in moderate quantity. Exceſs of animal food ſhould be avoided, as it yields too much nutriment to the body. The moderate uſe of vegetables, in proportion to the power of the digeſtive organs, ſhould be enjoined. Sumptuous tables may pleaſe the eye and gratify the palate. They are often a mark of generoſity and hoſpitality, but they are extremely injurious to health. They ſwell out the body; they bring on plethora, fatneſs, and inactivity. It is unfortunate that the pleaſures of ſocial

life ſhould be intermixed with ſo much allay, and that men do not govern their appetite by the rules of temperance and moderation.

As the neglect or exceſs of muſcular motion is ſo highly deſtructive to health, exerciſe or gentle labor becomes abſolutely neceſſary. "Exerciſe increaſes the flexibility of animal fibres; for flexibility is in all caſes increaſed by flexion. It gives greater firmneſs to the ſolid matter of the body. The nutritious fluid, as applied for the purpoſe of nutrition, will, in conſequence of its thinner parts being ſeparated by muſcular motion, become neceſſarily more condenſed. Exerciſe, by increaſing the action of the ſolids upon the fluids, tends powerfully to give ſuch condenſation to the body. The cellular membrane, a ſubſtance of ſo nice a texture, but of ſuch immenſe extent and importance in the human economy, will doubtleſs be rendered much firmer by muſcular motion *.—The tone and vigor of the moving fibres are increaſed by exerciſe. The nervous energy becomes greater. Habit is powerful in giving ſtrength and facility of motion,

* Cullen's Inſtit. of Med. § 23.

tion *.—The circulation of the blood, in conſequence of the action of the muſcles and the preſſure made on the arteries and the veins, is evidently accelerated; and along with the circulation, the motion of the lymph in the lymphatic ſyſtem. But the effect of this preſſure is moſt evident on thoſe veins which are furniſhed with valves †. It quickens the motion of the blood in its return to the right auricle of the heart; and of the lymph and chyle in its paſſage through the lymphatic and lacteal veſſels into the ſubclavian vein, in order to be intimately mixed with the blood, and perfectly aſſimilated to its nature. The contractions of the heart and arteries neceſſarily become ſtronger and more frequent, which, with the conſequent increaſed force of reſpiration, accelerate alſo the pulmonary circulation. This greater impetus of the blood through the whole ſyſtem cauſes moſt effectually a determination to the ſurface, and produces a free ſalutary diſcharge of the perſpirable matter.—By exerciſe too,

* Inſtit. of Medicine, § 114. "Within certain bounds, with reſpect to force, frequency and duration, the contraction of muſcles, by being repeated, is performed with more facility and force."

† Haller's Primæ Lineæ, § 63.

the appetite is increaſed, the tone of the ſtomach is reſtored, and the digeſtion highly promoted. The blood is determined from the internal viſcera of the breaſt and abdomen, which tends to prevent as well as to remove any obſtruction and unnatural enlargement of thoſe organs.—The generating powers of heat acting more vigorouſly in conſequence of muſcular motion, increaſe the native heat of the body. This effect of exerciſe may in ſome meaſure be dependent on the greater vigor of the circulation, and elaſticity of the ſolids.—Exerciſe too is powerful in obviating the plethoric fulneſs of the ſyſtem, and preventing the dangerous conſequences which ariſe from exceſs of blood. The abſorption of the animal oil is conſiderably promoted, and corpulency and fatneſs effectually prevented. A ſtate of great corpulency is very unfavorable to health. There is ſcarce any other ſtate which diſpoſes the conſtitution to be more frequently or more ſeverely afflicted with diſeaſes *.

"Theſe are a few of the principal ſalutary effects of moderate exerciſe on the human frame.

* Cullen's Lectures on the Inſt. of Medicine.—Vid. Gaub. Inſt. Pathol. § 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508.

frame.——Walking is well fitted for producing every beneficial change in the animal economy which has been enumerated. It is a natural and wholeſome exerciſe †.—But where the conſtitution is ſo much debilitated as to be unable to bear walking without too great fatigue, or where the peculiar nature of the diſeaſe renders it leſs proper, ſailing or travelling in a carriage may often be ſubſtituted in its place with advantage. Theſe exerciſes are well adapted to caſes of great weakneſs. They evidently create appetite, accelerate the circulation of the blood, determine to the ſurface, and promote perſpiration. But where the ſyſtem is vigorous, they are generally found, when uſed as a remedy, to be inſufficient either for reſtoring or preſerving health. Exerciſe in a phaeton, or in any other carriage where the patient drives himſelf, is, in all complaints in which the mind is dejected and apprehenſive, particularly proper, becauſe the attention is ſomewhat engaged, and there is leſs opportunity of making the malady the ſubject of meditation.—Exerciſe on horſeback, which

† Walking determines the blood in particular to the lower extremities, which in ſome diſeaſes is productive of ſalutary conſequences.

which is accompanied with conſiderable muſcular motion, is extremely beneficial, and, where it can be uſed, far ſuperior to the two laſt-mentioned ſpecies, for the purpoſe of giving vigor to the conſtitution. It is well fitted, not only for the preſervation of health, but for the removal of many chronic diſorders, eſpecially of thoſe that are attended with a general weakneſs of the body and the hypochondriac affection. For the patient, from his dejection of ſpirits, is apt in theſe complaints to fall into a ſtate of inactivity, which is the moſt certain method of continuing and increaſing them. But the good effects of every different kind of exerciſe are in all caſes the moſt evident, when the exerciſe is purſued with alacrity and pleaſure. It is a happy circumſtance in life, that exerciſe is often neceſſary to the performance of buſineſs, in which it nearly concerns us to be active. Thoſe exerciſes, whether attendant on buſineſs or amuſement, are the moſt ſalutary, which are moderate, but ſufficiently continued; and during the courſe of which, the perſon is in natural wholeſome poſtures, and breathes a cool pure air. When a patient, of a weak conſtitution, has been accuſtomed for ſome time to gentle exerciſes, he ſhould, as he gains ſtrength, proceed gradually

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to make uſe of thoſe in which greater muſcular motion is required *. From the neglect of this caution, many continue in a ſtate of weakneſs, which, without much difficulty, might at firſt have been eaſily removed †. Numbers, conſcious of a ſenſe of debility, refrain imprudently from thoſe exerciſes, which would tend moſt ſucceſsfully to reſtore them to a ſtate of health.

"By the neglect of exerciſe men often render themſelves unfit for truly enjoying thoſe pleaſures of life, by which the Author of nature intended to promote their happineſs, and to excite them to induſtry and activity. They alſo make themſelves diſqualified to act vigorouſly and ſucceſsfully in their reſpective ſtations of life, in which it was even their duty to have been more prudently attentive to the preſervation of their health. They not only injure themſelves, but unhappily entail on their poſterity the ſad effects of their indolence. But if men will not be active to preſerve their own health, and do juſtice to themſelves, it will be in vain to attempt

* Vid. Boerhaave's Aphor. 28; and Van Swieten's Com.

† When a perſon firſt begins to uſe exerciſe, he finds himſelf ſometimes fatigued and diſordered; but by perſevering in the uſe of it, ſuch effects ſoon diſappear as the conſtitution recovers its ſtrength and tone.

tempt to convince them of their error, by reminding them of the injuries done to their poſterity. The neglect of exerciſe is particularly hurtful to children; in conſequence of which the tone and vigor of their conſtitutions is often miſerably deſtroyed. Often too women at the moſt critical periods of their lives, from certain erroneous notions which they have ignorantly embraced, injure materially their health by leading a ſedentary life. By this means they render that weakneſs real and great, which before was in fact much leſs than it appeared to the patient through the deceitful medium of the imagination *."

If the unwholeſomeneſs of a profeſſion has contributed much to bring on the complaint, that profeſſion muſt be diſcontinued, otherwiſe the complaint cannot poſſibly be removed. If any buſineſs deprive a patient of his natural reſt, or if it expoſe him to exceſs of heat, or to an atmoſphere loaded with duſt, with metallic fumes, putrid vapors, or mephitic and phlogiſticated air, that buſineſs, in ſpite of all the efforts of art, will continue the diſeaſe. Every profeſſion or employment, in which there is any degree of compreſſion in conſequence of un-

* Vid. Abuſe of Medicine, p. 252.

unwholeſome poſitions, or of any other circumſtance, is extremely unfit for a patient laboring under chronic weakneſs. Parents ſhould be particularly attentive to the poſtures of children, leſt, through inattention, a curvature of the ſpine ſhould be induced. Children ſhould never wear ſtays, but of the moſt pliable kind; for while the body is growing, and the bones are griſtly, a deformity of perſon is moſt apt to occur. Women in general ſhould never lace themſelves ſo tight in their ſtays as to prevent the freedom of reſpiration, and to ſubject them to compreſſion. One would at firſt thought imagine that the ſenſation induced would be ſo uncomfortable, as wholly to preclude the neceſſity of any caution of this nature. But when we ſee women, not only of the firſt faſhion, but of good underſtanding, lace themſelves ſo tight in their ſtays as to be unable to breathe without a ſenſe of difficulty, we naturally pity them, of whatever rank or condition in life, while they purchaſe a falſe elegancy of their perſon at ſo dear a rate. How is it poſſible for ſuch ladies to have regular returns of appetite, an eaſy digeſtion, and good general health, who, contrary to the moſt obvious laws of ſelf-preſervation,

ſervation, torture themſelves in ſo ridiculous a manner. It is the misfortune of the preſent age, that ſo abſurd a faſhion is again prevailing among a ſenſible people.

If the air of a large town diſagree with a patient and weaken him, the country air is naturally to be preferred. If a damp air in low grounds is prejudicial, a dry air in an elevated ſituation will be ſerviceable. Large companies and public aſſemblies in unventilated rooms ought to be avoided, becauſe the air is heated, it is rendered relaxing, and ſurcharged with phlogiſton or inflammable principle. The frequent ventilation of rooms by opening doors and windows, is of great conſequence to the reſtoration of health, and is a practice therefore to be ſtrongly inculcated. Pure cool air is extremely ſalubrious. The fire in common ſitting rooms ſhould be ſmall in proportion to their ſize, and the air preſerved of a moderate temperature. During the time of reſt the patient ſhould lie on a matraſs in a cool ſpacious chamber, with the curtains kept continually open, and he ſhould be ſo covered as to maintain only a moderate degree of heat. He ſhould be particularly attentive not to lie too warm

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in bed, nor to encourage a copious perſpiration in the morning. Such a habit, which is extremely common, produces great relaxation, and is ſingularly detrimental to health. It is a very general error to expoſe the human body too much to the action of heat, with a view to preſerve it from the pernicious effects of cold. A moderate degree of cold braces and invigorates the nervous ſyſtem, and is highly conducive to health. Even an infant, which abſolutely requires to be kept comfortably warm, ſhould be cautiouſly preſerved from exceſs of heat. The influence of cold will be the leaſt conſiderable upon thoſe, who are frequently, but prudently expoſed to its action *.

With regard to the unneceſſary and imprudent uſe of medicines, a very common cauſe of chronic weakneſs, I ſhall refer my reader to a treatiſe of obſervations on that ſubject, which I have lately publiſhed. He will there find expoſed ſome of the moſt dangerous conſequences of the unſeaſonable and injudicious uſe of remedies, with remarks concerning the means of preſerving health, and curing diſeaſes.

* Abuſe of Med. p. 210.

Too copious an evacuation of the ſeminal fluid ſhould be cautiouſly avoided. Exceſs in venery will inevitably defeat every attempt to cure the complaint; yet it is a frequent cauſe, and difficult to be removed. What is exceſs in one perſon may be moderation in another. The exact line of juſt conduct in this reſpect is not eaſily to be aſcertained. A prudent marriage is often of the greateſt ſervice in reſtoring the health of a debauchee. All allurements and artificial excitements to venery are extremely deſtructive of health, and ſhould be ſteadily ſhunned by both ſexes. Natural feelings and ſtrength of conſtitution ſhould alone be conſulted. Rariſſimus coitus (to uſe the words of Boerhaave) is ſufficient for perſons of delicate and weakly conſtitutions. He runs into exceſs, who, poſt veneris voluptatem, feels himſelf cold, faint, and weak. Etenim ſummam voluptatem univerſalis excipit virium reſolutio, quæ crebro ferri nequit, quin enervat. Onaniſm is extremely common, particularly in public ſchools; and by this pernicious practice the boy ignorantly ruins his health before he arrives at years of diſcretion. Une quantité trop conſidérable de ſemence perdue dans les voies de la nature jette dans des maux trés fâcheux; mais qui le ſont bien davantage, quand la même quan-

quantité a été diſſipée per des moyens contre nature. Les accidents que ceux qui s'épuiſent dans un commerce naturel éprouvent, ſont terribles: ceux que la maſturbation entraîne, le ſont bien plus *.

Over-diſtention of the ſtomach is particularly to be avoided. Nothing is more common in this complaint than for the patient to have a keen irregular appetite; but if he ſatisfy that appetite, his ſtomach is over-loaded, and indigeſtion is neceſſarily induced, attended with acidity, flatulence, and pains in the ſtomach and bowels. In this caſe the diſeaſe is often ſuppoſed by the patient to proceed wholly from indigeſtion, although in reality it is chronic weakneſs, and indigeſtion is only a conſequence. To ſay that wind, or mucus, or acidity in the ſtomach and bowels is the primary complaint, is to miſtake the effect for the cauſe. Over-diſtention of the ſtomach is a common error, and often followed with very diſagreeable ſymptoms. This is another reaſon why public entertainments and high living, independent of their tendency to induce corpulency and fatneſs, are ſo very pernicious to health.

* L'Onaniſme, p. 4.

health. Many ſeem to have ſo little notion of what is called temperance in diet, that if they are ſet down to a rich entertainment, they are not able to refrain from diſordering themſelves. After a few hours, ſome will be diſtended with wind, ſome will be ſeverely afflicted with colic pains, others with the heartburn, acidity, eructation, ſickneſs, or even vomiting. During the time of a meal, a man of a weak conſtitution ſhould conſider, not ſo much what he can eat, as what he can digeſt; for indigeſtion injures greatly the tone of the ſtomach. This diſagreeable ſymptom frequently ariſes, not only from over-diſtention, but even from a moderate quantity of food which is of difficult ſolution. Deſerts after extravagant dinners, are a dangerous temptation to thoſe who labor under this complaint.

Exceſs of ſtudy is ſo powerful an occaſional cauſe of chronic weakneſs, that very few men of learning are free from the diſeaſe. We have before obſerved, that exceſſive application of mind exhauſts the nervous ſyſtem. It deſtroys the appetite, it impedes digeſtion, it weakens the ſtomach, interrupts the proceſs of nutrition, induces dejection of ſpirits, and enervates the mental faculties. As this cauſe of chronic

chronic weakneſs acts, in proportion to the greatneſs of the mental exertion, with different degrees of power, it is very neceſſary to guard againſt exceſs of thoſe ſtudies, the proſecution of which requires cloſe attention and depth of thought. Studies of this nature are often accompanied with anxiety and a tempotary uneaſineſs, which are extremely injurious to health. A mind endowed with great acuteneſs and ſenſibility, purſues its ſubject with warmth and ardor; but when it feels itſelf bounded by its own weakneſs, and unable to attain the height of literary perfection to which it had vainly aſpired, it ſtruggles within itſelf, and exerts all its ſtrength to break through the fetters that reſtrain it. When it perceives itſelf unqualified to accompliſh its bold deſign, it deſiſts from the attempt, but not without reluctance, and a ſenſe of diſappointment, joined to the humiliating conſciouſneſs of its own debility.

The deep parts of mathematics, of metaphyſics, natural philoſophy, logic, and ſuch like abſtruſe ſubjects, as they require a great degree of mental exertion, are improper ſtudies in chronic weakneſs. Compoſition of any kind, whether in verſe or proſe, where ſtrength of thought,

thought, elegance of expreſſion, and correctneſs of ſtile, are attended to, is, when cloſely purſued, a laborious and unhealthful employment. Every ſtudy, in which the faculty of remembering and of recollecting is much exerted, brings on great languor and fatigue, and ſhould therefore be ſteadily avoided. I have often known chronic weakneſs occaſioned by too great mental application, and continued to an obſtinate length before the patient perceived, and was convinced of his error. Weak minds are unable to bear the purſuit of any intricate ſtudy. Natural hiſtory, the hiſtory of men and manners, rhetoric and the belles lettres, many parts of experimental and moral philoſophy, along with other eaſy ſubjects of utility and entertainment, will afford a great variety of ſtudies, which may be moderately purſued without the ſmalleſt detriment to health. Reading is far leſs tireſome than writing, for the reader often is merely paſſive, and engaged chiefly in attending to facts. The juſtneſs of this obſervation will be clearly ſeen by a conſideration of the ſtudy of the law, and the ſtudy of medicine; in both which profeſſions the knowledge of facts is the grand requiſite.

The

The improper treatment of lying-in women, being a powerful cauſe of this diſeaſe, ſhould be obviated by every prudent means. Of thoſe who practiſe the art of midwifery, the ignorant ſhould be inſtructed, the timid encouraged, and the raſh convinced of the danger of their practice. The art of midwifery is an art which, in the preſent age, is juſtly held in high eſtimation. That is certainly an uſeful and a noble art, which relates to the preſervation of the lives of women and of children.

During pregnancy, moderate exerciſe ſhould be encouraged, unleſs it be contraindicated by floodings, great relaxations of the womb, or ſome other particular diſorder, which is of real importance to require ſuch unnatural reſtraint. The aliment ſhould be mild, plain, and nutritious; for high-ſeaſoned meats at this time are very improper. A moderate quantity of animal food is neceſſary, except the patient naturally loaths it; and in that caſe, milk and the moſt nutritious vegetables are required. Unneceſſary evacuations, eſpecially by * blood-

* Vid. a Treatiſe on the Management of Pregnant and Lying-in women, &c. by Mr. White, ſurgeon in Manchester.

letting, are very common, but they are very pernicious to women with child.

During labor the patient ſhould be kept agreeably warm, but the imprudent application of heat ſhould be induſtriouſly avoided. The curtains ſhould be open, the air cool and pure, and the circulation of it continually promoted. The attendants in the room ſhould be few, and they ſhould in general keep at a diſtance from the bed. If they be numerous, and croud about the patient, they heat the air and render it impure. By this means the woman is weakened, and the birth of the child is neceſſarily retarded. If the labor be ſevere and difficult, and the patient naturally of a relaxed conſtitution, an impure confined air, together with an imprudent application of heat, proves often dangerous, or even fatal in its conſequences. For by ſuch treatment the patient at laſt becomes exhauſted; the natural labor is at a ſtand; violent meaſures are adopted; fevers, floodings, and inflammations enſue. A pure and temperate air to a woman in labor is extremely refreſhing.

The general uſe of caudle ſhould be aboliſhed, as being unnatural and pernicious. The period during

during labor, as well as for ſome time after delivery, is critical, and not very convenient for beginning to acquire the habit of drinking wine and ſpirits. Wine and other ſtimulants ſhould not be given during labor, except in caſes where they are properly indicated. Thirſt may be quenched, and the blood diluted by any weak liquor taken cool. Hot things are extremely nauſeous and diſagreeable. The common caudle given during labor, heats the patient, quickens the pulſe, and produces pains in the head, with obſtinate ſickneſs and depreſſion of ſtrength. It hardly agrees even with thoſe women, who at other times are unfortunately accuſtomed to the liberal uſe of fermented liquors.—The operations of midwifery ſhould be performed with the greateſt caution and judgment. During natural labor, the practitioner ſhould give the neceſſary aſſiſtance, but he ſhould not injure the health of the woman, nor increaſe her miſery, by his too great officiouſneſs under the ſpecious pretence of relieving nature, when nature rejects his aid. The operation of turning the child ſhould never be attempted but in caſes of abſolute neceſſity. When it is proper, it ſhould be done in a deliberate manner and without violence. Many thouſands have been deſtroyed by the raſh and

haſty performance of this ſingle operation. Inſtruments in midwifery ſhould be uſed as ſeldom as poſſible.

When the child is born, the practitioner, according to the nature of the caſe, ſhould wait half an hour, or an hour, before he extracts the placenta, or after-birth. If it be a firſt child, and the muſcular fibres of the uterus be ſtrongly diſpoſed to contract, the ſpace of half an hour may be ſufficient; but if the woman has had ſeveral children, if there be no diſpoſition to a ſtrong contraction, and particularly if ſhe be of a relaxed conſtitution and ſubject to floodings, the practitioner ſhould wait near an hour before he deliivers the placenta. By this means he will preſerve the patient's health, and prevent great diſcharges of blood. We ſhould reprobate, in the ſtrongeſt manner, the haſty extraction of the after-birth, withour prudently waiting a ſhort time for the contraction of the womb and the kind aſſiſtance of nature. The ableſt and moſt experienced practitioners * of midwifery explode, in the ſtrongeſt terms, that method of procedure. The quick extraction of the after-birth is attended with an unnatural and

* Dr. Hunter, Dr. Young, Dr. Mackenzie, Dr. Harvie, Mr. White, Mr. Hamilton, &c. &c.

and depreſſing pain. It is found to be a common cauſe of fevers, floodings, and inflammations, which often terminate fatally. It contributes to bring on relaxations of the womb, fluor albus, miſcarriages, and habitual diſcharges of blood of the moſt obſtinate kind. In tearing the placenta away, the uterus has been ruptured, which accident is followed with certain death. At other times a part of the after-birth has been left, and, from its ſtimulus and corruption, has often been followed with dangerous conſequences. When the womb contracts of itſelf, and ſeparates the placenta, it compreſſes at the ſame time thoſe blood-veſſels, which were the connecting medium between them. By this means the hemorrhage is inconſiderable. But when the operator tears the after-birth from the mother as ſoon as the child is born, the womb has not had ſufficient time to contract, the blood-veſſels which entered into the placenta are not compreſſed, the blood therefore is diſcharged in an unnatural quantity, and the conſtitution of the patient moſt eſſentially injured. There is indeed no colorable appearance of an argument to defend the immediate extraction of the placenta; and it is ſomewhat ſtrange that any one, in this improved ſtate of midwifery, ſhould, contrary to the

the general opinion of the experienced part of mankind, continue in a practice which is ſo painful, ſo unnatural, and ſo pernicious.

Sweating after delivery ſhould be avoided by every prudent means, becauſe it relaxes the cutaneous veſſels, and weakens the conſtitution. The patient ſhould not be confined to live on caudle, or any ſuch unwholeſome food. She ſhould in general wait for the natural return of appetite, and may then be indulged with her ordinary diet, when that diet has conſiſted of mild and ſimple things. After the firſt day or two, a little animal food may with propriety be allowed, if there be any deſire for it, and no ſymptom of diſeaſe to contraindicate its uſe. When the patient before delivery has been accuſtomed to wine or ale, a moderate quantity of thoſe liquors may in general be taken with impunity, and will be found far more refreſhing than the common caudle. Such a diet will contribute greatly to promote a ſpeedy and ſucceſsful recovery. Milk and ripe fruits are abſurdly condemned as being improper for a woman in this ſituation; but when the patient can reliſh them, and they agree with the ſtomach and bowels, they may be taken with ſafety and advantage. We ſhall afterwards ſhew that ripe fruits, moderately

uſed,

uſed, are cooling and gently opening, and that they contribute to obviate the putreſcency of the fluids. They are uſeful in caſes of floodings, and in ſeveral ſpecies of child-bed fevers. But if the patient's ſtomach and bowels be very weak and irritable, all fruit is to be avoided, leſt it produce indigeſtion and purging, ſymptoms which depreſs the ſtrength and retard the recovery. Thus we ſee that caution is requiſite in the management even of the moſt common things, and that what is uſeful and proper in one caſe, is hurtful and dangerous in another.

If there be no particular relaxation of the womb, nor any other accidental complaint which requires the patient to be confined to her bed, ſhe may, in two or three days, be permitted to ſit up a while, and then day after day to continue up as long as her inclination prompts and her ſtrength will permit. When ſhe is ſufficiently recovered, ſo as to be able to leave her bed, and to remain up with eaſe and pleaſure, ſhe may, if ſhe has been properly treated, change her room, not only with the greateſt ſafety, but with evident advantage. It is unwholeſome to be long confined in the ſame chamber. If the woman has not been expoſed to the imprudent application of heat, and if the change

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be made with caution, there will be no danger of her taking cold. The greateſt number of women after delivery would, if not diſordered by miſmanagement, be well in the ſpace of ten or twelve days, with little or no difference in their health and appearance. The cuſtom of a month's cloſe confinement after delivery, is unnatural, and ought to be exploded, as it contributes to lay the foundation of future maladies. If the patient is afflicted with a diſeaſe, ſuch confinement may be neceſſary; but if her labor and recovery be natural, it will be found, particularly in the ſummer months, to be unſeaſonable, and will certainly prove injurious to her health.

The infant, for the ſpace of eight or ten months, ſhould be nouriſhed principally on woman's milk. If its mother has not a ſufficient quantity, a wet nurſe ſhould be procured. By this means we provide in the beſt manner for the preſervation of the child's health, and ſhun a powerful cauſe of chronic weakneſs. The nurſe ſhould be a woman of a good character, of a ſound conſtitution, and of an active chearful diſpoſition. Her milk ſhould be rich both to the eye and the palate; it ſhould not be too old; it ſhould flow with eaſe, and in ſufficient quantity.

quantity. To keep the child on ſpoon-meat alone, is an unnatural and unwholeſome method of diet. To accuſtom it very early in life to take occaſionally a little ſpoon-meat, is a neceſſary precaution by way of guarding againſt any accident, which might diſable the child from ſucking. Woman's milk is a mild animal fluid, agreeable to the palate, and well prepared by nature to nouriſh the delicate frame of an infant. Aſſes milk is the next in choice, as being light and eaſily digeſted. The milk of a cow is of a much ſtronger nature, and of more difficult ſolution. Bread is a vegetable ſubſtance, which, however well made and fermented, requires more vigorous digeſtive organs to animalize it and convert it into human blood. Taken by an infant too freely as diet, bread occaſions indigeſtion, flatulence, acidity, colic pains, and ſometimes purging. But though the child of a weakly woman ſhould not be deprived of human milk, yet a mother of a weak habit ſhould not ſuckle her own child. The evacuation of the milk, and the fatigue of attendance, would be more than ſhe could bear, and conſequently would ſink and exhauſt her. A healthful prudent mother, with a proper quantity of milk, is the beſt nurſe, and may act in that capacity without any diſadvantage

to her own conſtitution. A gay irregular woman, eager in the purſuit of pleaſure and amuſement, is perpetually diſordering both herſelf and her child. A thoughtleſs negligent woman is not fit to be intruſted with ſo important a charge. A weakly woman, though incapable of ſuckling her own child, may, in imitation of the ordinary courſe of nature, have her breaſts drawn for one or two months with advantage. The evacuation of the milk is natural, and ought, after delivery, to be continued for ſome time. Weakneſs, diarrhæa, feveriſh affections, and various complaints of the breaſts, frequently attend the ſudden and imprudent ſuppreſſion of the milk.

When diſorders occur during labor, or after delivery, they ſhould, if poſſible, be removed at their firſt beginning, otherwiſe the conſequences may prove alarming. No diſeaſes are more fatal than thoſe of lying-in women, when neglected or improperly treated. An accurate knowledge of the complaint, and the timely application of remedies, are the firſt requiſites to ſucceſsful practice. The ſtate of the bowels requires particular attention, as thoſe parts are more liable after delivery to obſtructions and inflammation. If there be obſtinate coſtiveneſs

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and colic pains, a glister or a mild laxative is indicated. These facts shew the great connection between the art of midwifery and the art of medicine; for, however conveniently the one may be separated in theory from the other, they are in fact united in the closest manner *. But it is not my intention, nor would it even be proper in this place to enter more fully into the discussion of the subject of practical midwifery, and of the treatment of breeding women, a subject indeed far too extensive to be included within the narrow limits of this treatise.

INDICATION II.

The second indication is to obviate particular symptoms which aggravate the complaint. We shall make some remarks here concerning indigestion, heartburn and acidity, colic pains, costiveness, dejection of spirits, and want of sleep.

1. We shall begin then with the symptom of indigestion, and point out the method of obviating it as far as relates to the regulation of diet.

* Mr. White's Treatise on the Management of pregnant and lying-in women, &c.

A mixture of animal and vegetable food affords the moſt wholeſome nouriſhment to the human ſpecies. Providence intended us to be almoſt univerſal inhabitants of the earth. Man, for this purpoſe, is endowed with the greateſt flexibility, both of body and mind. He is capable of living in low and in mountainous countries; in countries frozen with cold or burnt up with heat. He travels from pole to pole. He viſits the Alpine mountains, the flats of Egypt, the ice of Greenland, and the burning ſands of Ethiopia. The Author of nature has ſupplied him with food wherever he goes. He has given him a conſtitution, which is nouriſhed by an immenſe variety of things. The vegetable and the animal kingdoms teem with food to ſatisfy his hunger. His teeth, his ſtomach, and his bowels, are not perfectly ſimilar in length and ſtructure to thoſe of carnivorous or herbivorous animals; but bear, in this reſpect, a reſemblance to the teeth, the ſtomach, and the bowels of animals of both kinds.

It is dangerous and unwholeſome to live on fleſh-meat alone. Such a diet has conſiderable influence on the properties and qualities of the blood. It increaſes the putreſcent tendency of that vital fluid, and renders it too much of an alkaline

alkaline nature. There have been many examples of the ſcurvy produced by that cauſe. Dr. Gregory, a late eminent profeſſor of medicine in the univerſity of Edinburgh, mentions in his public lectures ſeveral caſes of this kind, which fell under his own care, and were completely cured by the uſe of vegetables. Fleſh-meat, moreover, is too ſtimulating and too nutritious to conſtitute alone the food of man. We have before taken notice that it tends to bring on plethora, for it produces too large a proportion of the coagulable lymph and globular part of the blood. It occaſions heats and feveriſh affections, and prediſpoſes the conſtitution to many diſeaſes. Severe exerciſe and labor might in ſome meaſure obviate the effects here mentioned; but the conſequence is, that exceſs of muſcular motion and full living would cauſe ſo great a conſumption of the vital powers, and ſuch a continual exertion of the ſimple ſolids, as neceſſarily to exhauſt the ſyſtem, and prove the cauſes of an untimely death.

Vegetable food, on the contrary, is of a milder and leſs ſtimulating nature. Being aceſcent, it corrects putrefaction. It is leſs nutritious than animal food, and is therefore found too weak a diet for many conſtitutions. It is unne-

unneceſſary, and would be generally improper, for perſons in health to live on vegetables alone; though ſuch a diet would be much ſafer than that which conſiſts intirely of animal food. There are indeed ſome who have a natural antipathy to an animal diet, and would from inclination live on vegetables. Theſe ſhould comply with the dictates of nature, and indulge her in her particular cravings. If they uſe gentle exerciſe proportioned to their diet, they often enjoy a happy ſtate of health, and arrive at a good old age. But if, in any future period of their lives, this inſtinctive appetite ſhould change, they ſhould change alſo their manner of living, and uſe along with their vegetable a moderate quantity of animal food.

Having premiſed theſe general obſervations concerning diet, it will appear evident, that we ſhall not recommend (as ſome practitioners have done) animal food alone as proper for thoſe laboring under chronic weakneſs. Such a practice, if it were generally complied with, would conduce greatly to the deſtruction of health. But nature oppoſes it, and, happily for mankind, ſhe oppoſes it with ſucceſs. Reaſon and experience alſo coincide with her determinations. Yet a vegetable diet is in general extremely

tremely improper in chronic weakneſs. It produces indigeſtion, flatulency, pain, acidity, and purging ‡. A mixture, therefore, of animal and vegetable ſubſtances, forms the beſt diet in this diſeaſe.

To obviate indigeſtion, the aliment ſhould be taken at every meal in moderate quantity, and of the moſt wholeſome kind. It ſhould be dreſſed in a plain manner, and eat without rich ſauces.

The fleſh of old animals is more alkaleſcent than that of young ones; it is more ſtimulating, and generally of quicker ſolution in the ſtomach. The fleſh of young animals, compared with that of old ones, is in many caſes more gelatinous, more viſcid, and leſs perſpirable. There are many examples of ſtomachs which can digeſt beef and mutton better than veal and lamb. Wild animals, whether birds or beaſts, that are accuſtomed to a good deal of muſcular action, afford in general a nouriſhment, which is more alkaleſcent, more ſtimulating, and more perſpirable, than thoſe which are tame, and, being under the direction of man, lead

‡ Haller Primæ Lineæ.

lead an unactive life. Animal food is more heating in proportion to the abſolute quantity of nutriment, which it contains. For this reaſon, the moſt nouriſhing is often improper in chronic weakneſs, and if taken too freely, diſorders the ſyſtem. Many ſtomachs can digeſt the weaker ſorts of meat, which are greatly loaded and oppreſt by thoſe of a more gelatinous, viſcid, and nutritious quality. A ſmaller quantity of the moſt nouriſhing ſhould ſuffice. The nutritious matter of the aliment ſhould always be proportioned to the ſtate of the blood-veſſels, reſpecting fulneſs and inanition. Nutritious food, eat without appetite, and conſequently without neceſſity, will generally be found in this diſorder to diſagree with the ſtomach, and to bring on hectic ſymptoms.

But as different ſorts of animal food agree with different conſtitutions, the patient muſt be regulated by his appetite, and by repeated trials. Mutton, veniſon, beef, lamb, and veal, are all in general wholeſome meats. Pork, which contains an eſſential oil, diſagrees with ſome, and is highly valued by others. Cleghorn, in his account of the diſeaſes of Minorca, obſerves, that, "of all the kinds of meat, none is here in ſo great plenty and perfection as pork,

pork, nor is any other ſo much eſteemed by the natives *." Hares, rabbits, chickens, turkies, guinea-hens, woodcocks, ſnipes, pheaſants, partridges, quails, larks, and the like, are ſubſtances of eaſy ſolution. Water fowls, ſuch as the gooſe, duck, teal, &c. in which there is a ſtrong eſſential oil, do not agree with all ſtomachs, though in ſome caſes of chronic weakneſs they are, in conſequence of their ſtimulating quality, much eſteemed. The pigeon affords an alkaleſcent and ſtimulating food, but when young is tender, and for the moſt part of eaſy digeſtion. Meat whoſe fibres are of a firm texture is, if other circumſtances be equal, of more difficult ſolution than meat whoſe fibres are tender. Animal food ſhould be kept for ſome time before it is uſed, that, by having undergone a ſlight degree of fermentation, it may be ſufficiently tender, and eaſy of digeſtion. Tough meat is an improper food for a weak ſtomach. But the meat ſhould not, as is too much the preſent faſhion, be kept ſo long as to become ſenſibly putrid, leſt, by the conſtant uſe of it, the quality of the blood ſhould be materially changed, and the patient rendered more ſubject to the ſcurvy and other maladies which

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* Page 53.

are attended with putreſcency of the fluids. Salted meat is more or leſs in a putrid ſtate, and if frequently uſed as diet, vitiates the human blood. Salt is by no means able to preſerve animal ſubſtances perfectly from corruption. It only retards, it cannot ſtop the progreſs of the putrid fermentation.—The hen's egg, though it is in general aliment of a good kind, yet diſagrees with ſome people, producing colic pains, indigeſtion, and ſickneſs. A hard egg is rather difficult to digeſt. Pure blood is nouriſhing, and in many caſes it is of eaſy ſolution. The fat of meat is nutritious, laxative, and more ſoluble than the lean, but, like butter and oil, it is apt to turn rancid, and to diſorder the ſtomach. Roaſted meat is by many thought preferable to boiled, as being more ſucculent, leſs hardened, and of quicker ſolution ‡. Meat which is ſomewhat rear affords a richer nouriſhment, and is of eaſier digeſtion, than meat which is perfectly done, and conſequently drier, firmer, and more inſoluble. Meat which is fried, or baked in a pye, is of more difficult ſolution than that which is moderately roaſted or boiled. Meat pyes are greaſy and heavy, and ſeldom digeſt well in weak ſtomachs. Cold meat, eſpecially

‡ Lectures on Materia Medica.

cially in warm weather, agrees better with many than hot.

Fiſhes are for the moſt part carnivorous, and feed either upon inſects, or upon one another. They are in general of more tender contexture than fleſh, and of more eaſy digeſtion. They are not ſo alkaleſcent, but they are ſometimes gelatinous and viſcid. I have known many perſons with weak ſtomachs who could digeſt ſeveral ſpecies of fiſh better than any other animal food. There are, however, ſome who never eat fiſh with pleaſure, and therefore never digeſt it with eaſe. Salmon, char, turbot, cod, ſcate, ſturgeon, bret, pike, eel, crab, lobſter, cockle, oyſter, herring, ſole, tench, perch, haddock, &c. afford an excellent nouriſhment. The eel, the ſalmon, the lobſter, and the oyſter, are ſometimes found, in conſequence of their viſcidity, to diſagree with weak people. Caviare, which is prepared from the roe of ſturgeon, is oily, rancid, and unwholeſome. The turtle is gelatinous, viſcid, highly nutritious, little perſpirable, and only fit for ſtrong ſtomachs. Dr. Mandeville aſſerts from his own experience, that he has known many inſtances of ſtomach-complaints, in which ſtock-fiſh, a dried fiſh of a leſs nutritious quality, has been digeſted with

eaſe, when the oyſter, lobſter, ſalmon, eel, and other viſcid and nutrient foods, have occaſioned indigeſtion. It ſeems probable that, in theſe caſes, the nutritious matter was too copious and too ſtrong for the aſſimilating powers. Salted fiſh, like other animal ſubſtances preſerved by ſalt, is unwholeſome, and, if uſed freely, proves hurtful to the conſtitution.

Milk is a fluid of an intermediate nature between vegetable and animal food. It is not putreſcent, but turns acid by fermentation. It is an animal ſubſtance of a moſt wholeſome kind to thoſe with whom it agrees. It affords a mild nouriſhment, and, if not taken to exceſs, gives but little ſtimulus to the ſyſtem. In ſome conſtitutions milk turns ſour upon the ſtomach, and forms a curd ſo viſcid that it is very indigeſtible. Several are remarkably fond of whey and butter-milk, and find them mildly nutritious, aceſcent, laxative, and cooling. Butter is laxative and highly nutrient, but often turns rancid, and diſagrees with the ſtomach in chronic weakneſs. I know a lady who can digeſt butter in a morning with eaſe, but who is always diſordered by it in an evening. Sound cheeſe is a ſtrong, inſoluble, but nutritious ſubſtance, and ſhould never be uſed

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as food, except by thoſe who take much exerciſe or undergo hard labor. Unſound cheeſe may be eat in very ſmall quantity, but never with a view to nutrition.

The vegetables moſt proper to be employed in chronic weakneſs ſhould be thoſe of eaſy digeſtion, and which, in conſequence of fermentation, do not diſtend the ſtomach with fixable air. —— The farinaceous vegetables, ſuch as wheat, rye, oats, barley, rice, peaſe, and beans, are nouriſhing and wholeſome food; and by the art of cookery, an art natural and peculiar to man, they are capable of being rendered agreeable to the palate in a variety of forms. Rye and oats are thought to be the moſt acefcent and laxative: They diſagree with ſome, and prove beneficial to others. Rice is gently aſtringent. Wheat made into bread, well fermented, ſufficiently baked, and not too new, is a very excellent food in chronic weakneſs. Peaſe and beans contain a large quantity of fixt air, which, when extricated by fermentation, is apt to diſtend weak ſtomachs, and to bring on flatulency and colic pains.

The potatoe, turnip, colliflower, cabbage, carrot, onion, aſparagus, artichoke, and other vege-

vegetables, which have undergone the action of fire before they are uſed, and conſequently are deprived of a conſiderable quantity of fixt air, agree well with many conſtitutions. Theſe vegetables, however, are not ſo wholeſome and nutritious as ſeveral of the farinaceous grains, nor ſhould they be uſed ſo freely by perſons whoſe ſtomachs are weak. Potatoes, aſparagus, and artichokes, are the leaſt flatulent, and often agree in chronic weakneſs, when cabbage, turnips, and onions will not. Vegetables, ſuch as celery, lettice, endive, raddiſh, cucumber, and melon, which have not been ſubjected in any reſpect to the action of fire, contain the whole quantity of their fixt air, are more difficult of ſolution, and in many caſes are apt to bring on acidity, flatulency, and diſtention of the alimentary canal. Cabbage and cucumber are of a firmer texture than colliflower and melon; and it is found by experience that colliflower and melon are not ſo long retained in the ſtomach as cabbage and cucumber *. Cucumber, indeed, has been known to lie forty hours in that organ undigeſted. Colliflower, potatoes, cabbage, and carrots ſeldom prove laxative; but endive, lettice,

* Lectures on Materia Medica.

tice, creſſes, melon, and the like, poſſeſs in general that quality.

Nuts, walnuts, cheſnuts, piſtachio nuts, ſweet almonds, &c. are oily, nutritious, and agree well with many conſtitutions.——The walnut is the tendereſt, and moſt eaſy to digeſt; and the filbert is juſtly preferred to the common nut. They ſhould be uſed freſh, or kept in a moiſt place, ſo as to be eaſily peeled.—The raw cheſnut is firm, flatulent, and difficult of aſſimilation; but when roaſted, it is tender, leſs flatulent, and of quicker ſolution.—All theſe vegetable ſubſtances ſhould be eat in great moderation; for too large a quantity of them oppreſſes the ſtomach, excites pain, and diſturbs the proceſs of digeſtion.

Honey and ſugar are nutritious in a great degree. A ſaccharine principle is thought by an eminent phyſiologiſt to be one of the moſt nutritious parts of vegetables. Both honey and ſugar poſſeſs this ſaccharine principle in its moſt pure and concentrated ſtate. They are gently opening, eſpecially honey and coarſe ſugar; and where they agree, they are, if uſed in moderation, very wholeſome. Many of the pernicious effects attributed to them are groundleſs.

groundleſs. When taken into the maſs of blood, they are aceſcent, and correct putrefaction. As they poſſeſs an antiſeptic quality, it is juſtly doubted whether or no they injure found teeth ‡. Honey and ſugar, nevertheleſs, are ſometimes found in chronic weakneſs to create acidity and foulneſs of the firſt paſſages. Honey has been obſerved to bring on colic pains, and ſpaſmodic affections of the ſtomach and bowels. I have ſeen ſeveral remarkable inſtances of this kind.

The ſummer fruits in general afford a mild and wholeſome nouriſhment. Some are more eaſily digeſted than others, and ſome of ſeemingly equal goodneſs have a very different effect on different conſtitutions. They poſſeſs a laxative quality in a high degree. Strawberries, currants, raſpberries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, figs, grapes, oranges, gooſeberries, cherries, apples, and pears, are among the moſt wholeſome. An apple, when raw, is of a firm texture; but when roaſted, it is ſoft, and of eaſier digeſtion. An apple, on account of its firmneſs, is more difficultly diſſolved in the ſtomach

‡ The black ſlaves in the Weſt-India iſlands, who live much on the dregs of ſugar, are ſaid to have good teeth.

mach than a pear. The ſame obſervations are applicable alſo in regard to ſeveral other kinds of ſummer fruits. The patient, therefore, by experience muſt endeavor cautiouſly to aſcertain which of them agree the beſt with him, and in what form and quantity they ſhould be taken. He ſhould know at what time of the day his ſtomach is in its moſt vigorous ſtate, and at that time eat moderately of them. Fruit is very improper after a full meal. Strong people who uſe much exerciſe may bear it, but the weak will certainly pay dear for their imprudence in this particular. Fruit is found by ſome to be the moſt wholeſome and agreeable upon an empty ſtomach; but there are many exceptions to this rule. In ſeveral caſes it may with propriety conſtitute a part of any meal, but the ſtomach ſhould not have been previouſly overloaded. Fruits preſerved with ſugar, as well as other ſweet things, afford, if well digeſted, a nouriſhment which is very innocent in the blood-veſſels; but they are apt to pall the appetite, to ferment, and produce acidity in the alimentary canal.

Notwithſtanding the general utility of vegetables to the human frame, there are ſome conſtitutions ſo much weakened and diſordered as

not to be able to take them in any quantity without inconvenience. In ſuch caſes, when real, and not the effect of imagination and groundleſs prejudice, vegetables muſt be avoided, except bread, and one or two others which may be found palatable, and eaſy to be digeſted. But even in theſe caſes, the patient, as he recovers his health, ſhould gradually endeavor to accuſtom himſelf to the moderate uſe of a greater variety of vegetables; for the effects of habit on the human body are extremely great. Vegetables, like animal food *, will often diſagree with one who is not accuſtomed to eat them, when, by a little uſe, they ſhall afterwards be eſteemed by the ſame perſon as palatable and wholeſome. I have been myſelf a witneſs of facts which juſtify this aſſertion.—Vegetables, as they do not tend to induce plethora, nor to excite heat and oppreſſion, are very wholeſome to perſons of an inflammatory habit. They are particularly proper and grateful in hot ſeaſons, and in hot climates, where men are leſs deſirous of animal food. The moderate uſe too of ice-cream along with vegetables

* I knew a phyſician accuſtomed to live entirely on vegetables, who, in conſequence of eating a ſmall quantity of fiſh, was afflicted with indigeſtion and dizzineſs.

tables is frequently beneficial to the conſtitution, as it takes off languor, and braces the nervous ſyſtem.

Tea and coffee, which are to be conſidered as parts of diet, are, in conſequence of their ſedative quality, found to be ſometimes ſerviceable in chronic weakneſs, eſpecially if attended with ſpaſmodic affections. But when they are uſed ſtrong, or in too great quantity, they are often injurious to the nervous ſyſtem; they occaſion tremors, heart-burn, acidity, watchfulneſs, and dejection of ſpirits.

To over-load the ſtomach with aliment, not only diſturbs the proceſs of digeſtion, but prevents the proper returns of appetite, and neceſſitates the patient frequently to take food without the ſmalleſt ſenſation of hunger. Mr. John Hunter has by a variety of uſeful experiments aſcertained, that the digeſtion of aliment is quick or ſlow, in proportion to the keenneſs or the want of appetite. If then a patient never allows time for the appetite to return, he will be ſubject to indigeſtion from this cauſe. The ſtomach and inteſtines will be over-loaded, and ſcarce able to move on their oppreſſive contents. From this cauſe too, as we ſhall ſoon have oc-

caſion to obſerve, obſtructions, obſtinate coſtiveneſs, and colic pains are produced, which ſometimes throw the inteſtinal tube into preternatural motions, and are followed with a diarrhœa. This diſagreeable habit of eating without hunger might often be prevented by prudently waiting for the calls of nature, and then by ſatisfying them with moderation.

High ſeaſoning of all kinds, as it is ſtimulating and pernicious to the alimentary canal, ſhould be avoided. Pepper and ginger are the moſt heating and inflammatory ſpices, and therefore ſhould be uſed with great moderation. Even common ſalt, which is the wholeſomeſt, ſhould not be taken in too large a quantity. Many are apt to eat muſtard to exceſs. High-ſeaſoned things are often more eaſy of digeſtion than thoſe without ſeaſoning, but they excite an unnatural appetite, irritate the ſtomach, deſtroy its tone, and increaſe the original complaint. Spices uſed too freely are very unwholeſome. They may indeed ſometimes palliate particular ſymptoms, but they are always detrimental to health. We do not mean to condemn the moderate uſe of ſpices, but the conſtant and exceſſive abuſe of them, which is too often obſervable.

Acids,

Acids, particularly the native vegetable ones, moderately uſed in diet, are grateful to the ſtomach, aſſiſt the appetite, promote digeſtion, oppoſe putrefaction, and are for the moſt part no ways injurious to health. When uſed in a medicinal view, I have known them in ſeveral caſes to take off the diſagreeable ſenſation of acidity in the ſtomach. Pickles are to be conſidered as ſpunges of vinegar, and poſſeſſed of ſimilar qualities with vinegar itſelf. But acids, where they diſagree, muſt be ſteadily avoided. The too free uſe of them is always very pernicious in chronic weakneſs, for it diſorders the firſt paſſages, impedes the proceſs of nutrition, and injures the whole conſtitution.

It is a good habit not to eat of too many things at one meal, leſt variety would provoke the appetite, and lead the thoughtleſs patient to gluttony and oppreſſion.—Some kinds of animal food are more heating than others, and particularly ſo to particular conſtitutions. In this caſe the patient, when hectic ſymptoms prevail, ſhould chuſe that food which is the leaſt ſtimulating to the ſyſtem. Pork, calf's head, ſalted meats, water-fowls, ſalmon, herrings, rich ſoops, and all ſtrong viſcid and alkaleſcent foods, poſſeſs in general this quality in

a high degree. As milk and vegetables are much leſs ſtimulating than fleſh-meat, the temporary uſe of them is neceſſary and very ſerviceable in ſome caſes of chronic weakneſs.

Manducation, or the act of chewing, ſhould never be performed in a ſlight and haſty manner. Qui, præ voracitate, cibos ſolidos, tenaciores, prius quam deglutiant, commandere prætermittunt, ventriculo plus faceſſunt negotii, quam natura impoſuit *. The learned Gaubius proceeds afterwards to enumerate the ſymptoms of indigeſtion, which occur in conſequence of the neglect of manducation. He then juſtly concludes, Hæc tamen debilibus ac deſidibus magis, quam robuſtis & exercitatis, eveniunt.

With regard to the frequency of taking food, we may obſerve that two principal meals in a day are generally ſufficient, and far preferable to four. Nocent ſibi, quorum perpetuo in patinis aut poculis animus eſt; ut ſemper pleno ventri nunquam induciæ concedantur †. Nine or ten o'clock in the morning, and four or five in the evening, are thought by ſome to be the moſt convenient times. Dr. Cullen is of opinion

* Gaub. p. 240. † Ibid. p. 241.

nion that the morning is the wholeſomeſt part of the day for making a principal meal, becauſe the animal ſyſtem is the moſt compoſed, and the leaſt liable to be affected by ſtimulants.—Freſh food ſhould not be thrown into the ſtomach among that which is partly digeſted, and conſiderably advanced in the proceſs of fermentation. The freſh food will retard the digeſtion of the old, and will itſelf be hurried on too faſt towards a ſtate of putrefaction. The appetite of a moderate man is generally the beſt director concerning the nature and quantity of his food, and it ſhould not be cloyed with exceſs. A ſpare diet is the moſt favorable to health and long life.

Victus tenuis quæ quantaque ſecum
Adferat ———

Children require a fuller diet than adults, and a greater frequency of meals; but their diet ſhould conſiſt principally of milk and vegetables, with a very ſmall allowance of animal food.

The too liberal uſe of wine, or of any ſpirituous liquors, accuſtoms the ſtomach to an unnatural ſtimulus, which increaſes its action, and conſe-

conſequently deſtroys its tone. Fermented liquors, when taken to exceſs, prove injurious to the whole machine, not only by over-diſtention of the ſtomach, but by the action of their narcotic power. From this cauſe weakneſſes of the firſt paſſages, attended with acidity and indigeſtion, are often produced. The ſtomach, eſpecially in infantile age, ſhould be cautiouſly preſerved from the action of ſtrong ſtimulants of every kind. From the neglect of this precaution, children, at a very early period of life, are found to labor under chronic weakneſs, complicated with the gout and other maladies,

Fermented liquors, imprudently taken, are juſtly eſteemed a poiſon. A man may be thought very ſober, and yet drink a large quantity of them, ſo as greatly to quicken his pulſe, and to excite an unnatural heat. A bottle of port or of claret, every day, is too much to be drunk by any one who prefers health to pleaſure. That quantity is more particularly hurtful to a ſedentary man. On the contrary, a few glaſſes of a good wine after dinner and after ſupper, are frequently ſerviceable in caſes of chronic weakneſs, and will generally be found ſufficient, unleſs the patient has been previouſly accuſtomed to drink freely. Wine

thus

thus moderately uſed, obviates putreſcency, and promotes digeſtion *. It gently ſtimulates, but does not weaken the conſtitution. By an excitement of the ſyſtem, and by a diminution of irritability, it has been obſerved to render the pulſe ſlower, and mitigate hectic heats †. We would recommend wines of a good body, ſuch as madeira, port, claret, tent, cherry, &c. But if claret, or any other particular wine, as is ſometimes the caſe, turns ſour on the ſtomach, it muſt then be avoided.

Malt liquors, where the patient is weakened and relaxed, are generally improper. They frequently bring on flatulence, acidity, and diarrhæa. There are, however, many exceptions to this general rule. Small beer, in proper condition, is occaſionally a good diluter. Ale and porter are ſometimes found to agree with the ſtomach, to promote digeſtion, to open the body,

* Wine and water, with a little lemon juice and ſugar, is ſometimes found a pleaſant and wholeſome liquor; removing acidity and promoting digeſtion.

† Wine has ſometimes the ſame effect in diminiſhing quickneſs of the pulſe in nervous and putrid fevers, accompanied with great irritability. Dr. Gregory's Lectures.

body, and procure ſleep. Porter is a heavy liquor, and ſhould be taken in great moderation.

It is however obſervable that, in ſome conſtitutions, where chronic weakneſs is attended with hectic fever, the patient, at particular ſtages of the diſeaſe, cannot bear the ſmalleſt quantity of wine, or of any generous fermented liquor, without an increaſe of the hectic ſymptoms. In ſuch a ſtate of body, all ſpirituous liquors ſhould be avoided, and the ſtomach preſerved as much as poſſible from the action of ſtimulants.

In ſome caſes neither wine nor malt liquors of any kind can be uſed, but they ferment, become acid, and diſorder the ſtomach. Water with a toaſt in it is, in ſuch circumſtances, a proper diluent.* It ſhould be taken cold, as all warm liquors are in general relaxing and pernicious. Cold water ſtrengthens the ſtomach and clears away impurities. It dilutes the blood, gives tenſion to the veſſels, promotes the ſecretions, but does not heat or ſtimulate the ſyſtem. It may ſometimes be neceſſary to mix a little rum or brandy with the water, when a moderate ſtimulus is required. Spirits retard fermentation, and prevent acidity. They

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ſhould never be taken pure, nor uſed but in ſmall quantity. There is danger, leſt the proportionof ſpirits ſhould be increaſed, and thus the remedy be deſtroyed by exceſs.

There are many who cannot make a meal without drinking. They find ſome fluid neceſſary to facilitate the ſolution of the aliment. But this is by no means a rule without exceptions. There are not a few who have a good appetite, and generally eat a hearty dinner without drinking; but who, when they take an unuſual, tho' a moderate, quantity of any common liquor, are troubled with oppreſſion of the ſtomach, and a ſenſe of fulneſs. But the habit of not drinking, for the purpoſe of dilution, at a principal meal, is by no means to be recommended as a general one. We only wiſh to obſerve, that it is uncomfortable and pernicious to drink always by meaſure, without thirſt. I have heard ſome people ridiculouſly advance, that they never were thirſty during the whole courſe of their lives. The anſwer is, that they have been too officious, they have anticipated the calls of nature, and have thought their own judgment a ſurer guide than inſtinct. By the ſame unnatural and pernicious method of anti-

cipation, they might have prevented hunger as well as thirſt.

2. If, notwithſtanding the neceſſary precautions relative to diet, the aliment ſhould proceed too far in the proceſs of fermentation, and the patient ſhould be troubled with heart-burn and acidity of the firſt paſſages, abſorbent, demulcent, and emetic remedies will be required.

There is a variety of abſorbents uſed in common practice. Magneſia, chalk, lime-water, and alkaline ſalts are the moſt eligible. They all unite with the acid of the ſtomach and inteſtines, and form a neutral ſalt. By this means they obviate acidity, which is a frequent cauſe of the heart-burn. Magneſia, combined with the vegetable acid, produces a neutral ſalt that is gently aperient. The neutral, formed by the union of chalk and the vegetable acid, is of an aſtringent nature. The mild alkaline ſalts, as they are ſoluble in water, and unite eaſily with acids, are very ſerviceable in theſe caſes. Abſorbents ſhould not be uſed to exceſs; for by deſtroying totally the acid of the ſtomach, they promote a putrid tendency in the animal fluids.

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With regard to demulcent remedies, gum arabic, the extract of liquorice, and other mucilaginous ſubſtances, are uſeful in ſupplying the want of mucus, in obtunding the acid acrimony, and defending the ſenſible coats of the ſtomach and bowels.

If the acidity be great, and attended with ſickneſs, a gentle emetic is indicated and given with advantage in chronic weakneſs. To clear the ſtomach of impurities, ipecacuan alone, or rather with a ſmall quantity of tartar emetic, is found to anſwer extreamly well. In the treatment of children, tartar emetic, as it is without taſte, is a moſt convenient remedy for this purpoſe. But though it is a fact, that gentle vomiting increaſes the tone and action of the ſtomach, yet emetics ought not to be too often repeated. The imprudent repetition of theſe remedies will render them indiſputably pernicious, by exhauſting the ſyſtem and diſordering the ſtomach.

3. Colic pains are a troubleſome ſymptom in chronic weakneſs. I have obſerved that they frequently ariſe from overloading the ſtomach and bowels with too large a quantity of food. In this caſe, the contents of the alimentary canal

nal become ſo conſiderable, as not to be moved along without a ſenſe of pain and difficulty. The fixt air, which is ſeparated from the aliment by fermentation, increaſes the uneaſineſs, fulneſs, and diſtention of the inteſtinal tube. The removal of this ſymptom conſiſts in clearing the firſt paſſages by a gentle laxative, and in moderating the appetite in ſuch manner as not to injure nature by an imprudent exceſs. The periſtaltic motion of the ſtomach and inteſtines is able to force on with eaſe a certain quantity of aliment; but if thoſe organs are weakened and overloaded, that motion is often too languid to perform its natural function.

Independent of this cauſe of the colic, which is attended with coſtiveneſs, and ariſes from exceſs of food, the ſtomach and bowels in chronic weakneſs are frequently ſo irritable as to be very ſubject to ſpaſmodic affections and ſevere pains, although the body be open, or the patient even labor under a diarrhæa. We palliate or remove this ſymptom by antiſpaſmodic remedies; the principal of which are opium, ſalt of hartſhorn, muſk, and æther. Opium is the moſt to be depended upon, though muſk, æther, and ſalt of hartſhorn have frequently the deſired effect. At the

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ſame time we would caution againſt the unneceſſary uſe of opium, of which there is juſt cauſe to complain. The abuſe of opium tends to deſtroy the tone of the ſyſtem, to bring on a morbid irritability, and to increaſe the diſeaſe *.

4. Coſtiveneſs is the next ſymptom which falls under our conſideration. It is induced either by exceſs of food, or by food of an improper kind. It ariſes too from a diminution of the periſtaltic motion of the bowels, or from a want of bile and of other fluids ſubſervient to the purpoſes of digeſtion. Coſtiveneſs, from whatever cauſe it proceeds, is often very pernicious in chronic weakneſs. It brings on pain, anxiety, and indigeſtion.

When exceſs of food is the cauſe of coſtiveneſs, moderation, as was before taken notice of under the article of colic, is the only rational means of cure.—With regard to the quality of the aliment, the patient, in this caſe, ſhould ſtudy what things agree beſt with his conſtitution. The moderate uſe of ripe fruits and of other vegetables tends to keep the body open,

* Abuſe of Medicine, p. 277.

open, and is, when the ſtomach can bear them, ſerviceable to perſons of a coſtive habit. We have obſerved that different fruits and different vegetables agree or diſagree with different patients, and that experience is the grand criterion which, in this reſpect, muſt determine our choice. In caſes of coſtiveneſs, brown bread, made of wheat mixt with rye, is, when it agrees with the ſtomach, preferable to bread of a finer ſort. Malt liquors are gently opening. For this reaſon too, butter and the fat of meat, where they are eaſily digeſted, are uſeful in a few caſes of chronic weakneſs; though in others all oily ſubſtances, as was before ſaid, turn rancid in the ſtomach, and are very pernicious. Butter laid on a toaſt, and not melted, is more eaſily digeſted than butter which is melted upon it when hot, and conſequently burnt in. Milk renders ſome people coſtive, though to others it proves laxative. Old milk is more binding than new, and boiled milk has that quality in a ſtill higher degree. Cheeſe ſometime occaſions great coſtiveneſs.

If the ſtomach and bowels are deprived of the ſtimulus of bile, on account of biliary obſtructions in the gall ducts; or if there be an unnatural torpor of the inteſtinal tube, with great

great diminution of the peristaltic motion, the cautious administration of laxative remedies is highly serviceable. Such practice will immediately relieve the patient, by removing so troublesome a symptom.—Rhubarb is frequently employed as a laxative. It is highly extolled by some practitioners, and abused in the same proportion by others. It has a nauseous taste, but there are many patients who can take it with ease, and find it to have the desired effect.—In some habits oily medicines, which act with little or no stimulus, will obviate costiveness. For this purpose the castor oil is given with success, and proves sufficiently laxative.—Manna, sena, tamarinds, cream of tartar, sulphur, lenitive electuary, jalap, neutral salts, particularly soluble tartar, Epsom salt, and tartarised tartar, are employed. They are often variously combined together, and answer well the purpose of keeping the body open. In this way, lenitive electuary and jalap, mixt with a little oil, are often an useful composition; not disagreeable to the taste, nor severe in its operation. The neutral salts alone frequently disappoint the practitioner, either by not operating at all, or by purging the patient too much.—Though gentle laxatives, when they will answer, should always be preferred; yet,

in ſeveral inſtances, lenitive electuary, manna, ſena, tamarinds, and other mild remedies, occaſion flatulency and pains in the inteſtinal tube. In ſome conſtitutions, therefore, the warmer laxatives, ſuch as aloes and gum guaiac, are given with propriety and ſucceſs. Aloes, in particular, is, in this diſeaſe, a medicine of much importance. It operates principally on the larger inteſtines; and, when prudently given, it ſeldom exceeds the intention of the practitioner. In conſequence of its ſtimulant effects, it is obviouſly improper in the hemorrhoids, and eſpecially when they are attended with a deſcent of the rectum. Sulphur, oils, and the mildeſt laxatives, which do not ſtimulate the part affected, are the moſt eligible in theſe caſes.

When laxatives of any kind are employed in chronic weakneſs, the practitioner ſhould ſtudy to ſuit them with exactneſs to the patient's conſtitution. The body ſhould be kept open according to the nature of the caſe; but much purging ſhould in general be cautiouſly avoided. Such an evacuation would weaken and increaſe the complaint. There is only an exception or two, where plethora and viſceral obſtructions are preſent, which indicate gentle purgatives.

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In ſuch caſes Harrogate water and ſea water, taken in moderate quantity, and at a proper ſeaſon, are very uſeful and efficacious remedies. Stools of a dark clay color are frequently a ſign, in this diſeaſe, of ſome impediment to the free paſſage of the bile, and indicate opening medicines. At other times they occur, not from any obſtruction of the liver, but merely from want of blood, and languor of circulation, in conſequence of which a ſufficient quantity of bile is not ſecreted *. Theſe two caſes ſhould be accurately diſtinguiſhed, and not confounded together; for purging gives relief in the one, and does hurt in the other.

It may not be improper to caution here againſt the unneceſſary uſe of purgative remedies; a practice ſo frequently detrimental to health. "The freedom with which they are ſometimes employed on the moſt trivial occaſions, would almoſt perſuade one to believe that ſome were of opinion they might be gi-

* The ſame thing happens to women after delivery reſpecting the ſecretion of the milk. When a woman who is very weak and emaciated, has a child, there ſhall be ſcarce any milk at all; but when ſhe has recovered her ſtrength, and has another child. the flow of the milk ſhall be found abundantly ſufficient to nouriſh it.

ven, not only without danger, but with abſolute impunity. On the contrary, purgatives of every kind are unnatural to the human conſtitution. They are capable of conſiderably exciting the alimentary canal, and of inducing a ſtate of debility, which may render it unable to diſcharge the neceſſary functions of the animal economy with eaſe, conſtancy, and vigor *." "No prudent practitioner of medicine would ever preſume to order a purgative without the cleareſt evidence of its neceſſity, and the faireſt probability of removing a greater evil than the remedy itſelf is capable of producing †." In caſes of coſtiveneſs, along with extreme weakneſs, where we dare not riſk even the operation of the mildeſt laxative, gliſters are indicated and employed with ſucceſs.

5. Dejection of ſpirits is another ſymptom, which requires the utmoſt attention of the practitioner to palliate or remove it; for it is generally connected, in this diſeaſe, with alarming apprehenſions, timidity of mind, and ſome degree of falſe imagination. In the proper management of this ſymptom, there is an opportunity for the phyſician to ſhow much judgment and addreſs.

* Abuſe of Medicine, p. 74. † Ibidem, p. 77.

addreſs. The very ſight of ſome practitioners does good to their patients. But theſe are men of an humane and generous diſpoſition. They feel for their fellow-creatures in diſtreſs. Humanity forbids them to increaſe the uneaſineſs of their minds, and generoſity teaches them to diſdain every little conſideration of intereſt, which is not perfectly conſiſtent with the patient's condition in life. Their converſation, which is manly, rational, and untainted with the low deceits of a craft, both ſooths and animates the mind. It affords at once entertainment and inſtruction, ſocial pleaſure and rules of health. The phyſician ſhould ſtudy and humor the different diſpoſitions of his patients. The careleſs ſhould be brought to a ſenſe of their ſituation by a cautious admonition of their danger. The timid and deſponding ſhould be encouraged into the pleaſing hope of a recovery by a favorable account of their caſes, and by a faithful repreſentation of ſimilar ones which have admitted of ſucceſsful treatment. There are ſome patients of ſuch a temper of mind, who, if the practitioner ſhould perceive that they were not ſo ill as they imagined themſelves to be, and then ſhould honeſtly inform them of his ſentiments, would immediately diſmiſs him as a man ignorant of the diſeaſe. Some patients,

tients, on the contrary, are happy when the practitioner gives the moſt favorable report of their caſe, and are diſtreſſed, beyond expreſſion, when he paints it with a gloomy aſpect. Such and ſo great are the differences of opinion, which actuate the human race. The phyſician, therefore, ſhould be a man of the world. He ſhould be able to read internal characters from external ſigns. He ſhould not ſtudy men and manners in the common ſuperficial way, which conſiſts principally of the knowledge of a few idle, but faſhionable, forms and ceremonies, that only require opportunity, ſome attention, little judgment, but no depth of underſtanding. He ſhould endeavor to penetrate at once into the mind, and to aſcertain with a cautious exactneſs the ruling paſſion. He ſhould obſerve countenances, geſtures, words, and actions, and yet ſeem as perfectly regardleſs of theſe things as if he made no obſervations upon them. He ſhould with all poſſible care gain the confidence of his patient; and if he ſhould happen to be intruſted with any family ſecrets, or to be informed of any family diſtreſſes, he ſhould act with the utmoſt regard to honor and humanity. The artful man, without ſincerity, is, in my mind, a moſt deteſtable object. He is not to be feared by a man of ſenſe, but he

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is heartily to be deſpiſed. The artifice employed by an honeſt man is an artifice intended to promote the happineſs of ſociety. A good heart has great influence on an able head.

The patient, who is afflicted with dejected ſpirits, ſhould have his mind conſtantly engaged in buſineſs or amuſement. I mention buſineſs firſt, becauſe it is of the firſt importance. It is buſineſs alone which can give a juſt reliſh to amuſements. Amuſements, without buſineſs, are too trifling to be the chief objects of a rational being; for the mind, in this ſituation, conſcious of its ſuperior talents, looks down with contempt on the little things in which it finds itſelf ſolely engaged. Buſineſs, beſides, is more important than amuſements, and the mind always attends more cloſely to important purſuits. If the patient is not employed in any occupation, with a view to his livelihood, there are a thouſand rational ways of ſpending his time, both in improving himſelf, and in ſerving mankind. In the choice of his employment, he ſhould conſult his own taſte, and form a judgment for himſelf. There are duties of the ſublimeſt ſort, which a ſuperior fortune enables a man to perform. There is too a variety of uſeful ſtudies which he may proſecute with pleaſure

pleaſure and ſucceſs. He has the world of ſcience before him as matter of noble ſpeculation. The earth, through the good providence of God, teems with riches for the happineſs of man. The ſtudy and practice of the art of farming has employed the mind, and effectually removed dejection of ſpirits. The ſtudy of botany, and other branches of natural hiſtory, which, when followed with alacrity, is conducive to an active life, has alſo been attended with the happieſt effect. When one is purſuing ſome laudable employment, innocent amuſements afford a double pleaſure. They prevent the mind from dwelling on the diſeaſe. Riding, walking, fiſhing, driving a ſingle-horſe chair, ſhooting, hunting, ſcating, chearful company, light reading, cards, back-gammon, &c. are often ſerviceable in dejection of ſpirits. Amuſements which are accompanied with freſh air, and agreeable exerciſe, are the moſt healthful. Gentle motion puts off low ſpirits. Hunting is too ſevere an exerciſe, but the pleaſure of following the hounds in ſome meaſure compenſates for the fatigue, and renders it, upon the whole, conducive to health. Cheſs, all games, and every ſpecies of gaming, where very cloſe attention is paid, or where the mind, from the greatneſs of the ſtake, is in perpetual anxiety,

anxiety, are very pernicious.—The patient ſhould never indulge a love of ſolitude; for ſolitude will as certainly increaſe his diſorder, as a chearful intercourſe with agreeable companions will contribute to remove it. But he ought to avoid all company in which he does not feel himſelf perfectly at eaſe, and free from reſtraint. Good company is generally the moſt eaſy; and eaſe, which has no connection with rudeneſs or a want of delicacy, is the firſt requiſite of good breeding.

6. Watchfulneſs, or ſleep that is diſturbed and unrefreſhing, is another ſymptom which the phyſician muſt particularly endeavor to obviate. It often ariſes from the patient's lying too many hours in bed. That kind of indulgence defeats the very end which it was intended to anſwer.—From this cauſe ſome are apt to wake early in the morning, and to be immediately alarmed with fears and apprehenſions.—Others ſoon find themſelves unable to ſleep in the beginning of the night. Fatigued at length with their reſtleſſneſs, they fall perhaps on a doſe late in the morning; by which means they ſoon acquire the habit of lying awake in the night, and of ſleeping in the day, which is a very pernicious one, and ought to be changed. The patient ſhould not be in

bed above ſeven or eight hours; and whether he has reſted well or not, he ſhould conſtantly riſe at his uſual time. Sleep, like hunger, will generally return at laſt, where the conſtitution is not abſurdly pampered and indulged. Exerciſe, and even moderate labor, are excellent means for procuring ſleep, with the want of which the active and laborious part of mankind are ſeldom troubled.

If the patient make a plentiful meal at ſupper, the conſequence in many caſes will be a general ſenſe of uneaſineſs, nocturnal heats, oppreſſion of the ſtomach, and want of ſleep, or ſleep unrefreſhing and interrupted with frightful dreams. But this obſervation holds good only during the preſence of a diſeaſe; for when a man is in health and exerciſe, a plentiful ſupper, if he be hungry, may be taken without any diſadvantage. Sleep, with a full ſtomach, is neither unnatural nor unwholeſome. On the continent there are whole nations among whom the ſupper has been the principal meal for ages paſt, and the inhabitants have not found any juſt cauſe to change this part of their method of living. The brute creation, almoſt without exception, go to reſt after a full meal; and however imperfect the analogy may be in many other caſes, it is in this evidently ſtrong and juſt. Man too, like other animals, finds

finds himſelf, after a plentiful meal, to have naturally a diſpoſition to reſt, and it can hardly be ſuppoſed improper and unwholeſome to follow the undoubted guidance of nature *. Reaſon, in this inſtance, is of inferior authority. I have the honor of being acquainted with ſeveral eminent phyſicians, who maintain it as a fact founded on obſervation, that digeſtion is performed in as perfect a manner during ſleep, as at any other time. I know many people in health, who take a hearty ſupper without the ſmalleſt inconvenience. Numerous facts of this kind are manifeſt to the moſt ſuperficial obſerver.—But, notwithſtanding theſe remarks, I would by no means be underſtood to recommend the ſupper as a principal meal. I am confident ſuch a habit is often very hurtful to the conſtitution. For though a man in health and in exerciſe may eat freely at ſupper, yet one who is not in health, or who, if in health, is not in exerciſe, will certainly be injured by it. When I ſpeak of the exerciſe in conſequence of which a man may be allowed to

* Sleep after dinner is not unwholeſome, provided the conſtitution requires it, and the perſon has not been too many hours in bed. But when any one lies during the night eight hours in bed, ſleep after dinner is an abſurd indulgence, which will ſeldom anſwer any good purpoſe, and may often prove hurtful.

eat ſuppers, I do not mean a trivial ſaunter, or loitering for an hour or two in an eaſy carriage, but exerciſe which approaches to moderate labor. If a perſon be in health, and only uſes gentle exerciſe, ſuppers will contribute to overload his conſtitution, to induce plethora, over-diſtention of the veſſels, and an unhappy train of conſequences.

When, notwithſtanding a proper attention to exerciſe and regimen in every reſpect, there is ſtill an obſtinate watchfulneſs, antiſpaſmodics and opiates are required. But opiates ſhould in this caſe be uſed with caution, and never without abſolute neceſſity. If the doſe be too large, the patient is apt to wake in the morning ſick, faint, and dejected.—We may juſt hint too in this place, that if any particular ſymptom of chronic weakneſs ſhould diſturb the patient in the night, the natural return of ſleep will depend on the removal of the irritating cauſe, whether local or more general, and whether connected with pain or with anxiety.

There are ſeveral other ſymptoms, which ſeem to require a full and ſeparate conſideration, ſuch as obſtinate head-achs, vomiting, chronic rheumatiſm, worms, diarrhæa, feveriſhneſs, obſtruc-

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tion of the menſes, biliary concretions, &c. But the removal of theſe, as ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs, depends principally on reſtoring the tone of the ſyſtem, and therefore we ſhall have occaſion here to make only a very few obſervations upon them.

Obſtinate head-achs are ſometimes relieved by topical bleeding, by ſhaving the head, by bliſters, iſſues, ſetons, warm fomentations, antiſpaſmodics, mild ſudorifics, &c.—Frequent vomiting requires a ſtrict obſervance of the rules laid down for the prevention of indigeſtion. Gentle emetics, abſorbents, laxatives, ſaline mixtures, cordials, aromatics, opiates and other antiſpaſmodics, may be occaſionally indicated.—The chronic rheumatiſm is ſometimes relieved by volatile liniments, bliſters, leeches, frictions, gum guaiac, the oil of turpentine, decoctions of the woods, neutral ſalts, antimonials, Dover's powder, and other gentle ſudorifics.

Worms, when they occur in conſequence of relaxation in the ſtomach and bowels, are a ſymptom of chronic weakneſs, and are evidently to be overcome by ſtrengthening the whole conſtitution. We may juſt take notice, that the powder of tin is a va-luable remedy in this caſe.

Mild

Mild mercurials, and purgatives too are ſometimes required; but they are often uſed with imprudence, and prove extremely pernicious.

A diarrhæa, according to its peculiar nature, is to be removed by emetics, laxatives, abſorbents, demulcents, cordials, and opiates. Laxatives ſhould not, as is too frequently the caſe, be promiſcuouſly uſed without indication. They are indicated and given with ſucceſs when there is any morbid matter in the bowels, which ought to be removed. Rhubarb, in this caſe, is thought by many to be a convenient laxative. When abſorbents are neceſſary, chalk is to be preferred, as it proves gently aſtringent. Aromatics, infuſed in red wine, are uſeful cordials. But, when the diarrhæa is connected with an irritable ſtate of the inteſtinal tube, opium is in general the moſt important remedy.

Feveriſhneſs from cold is a very frequent occurrence, and aggravates the ſymptoms of chronic weakneſs. The means which are adapted to remove it are many and various. The cooling antiphlogiſtic regimen, but not always in its fulleſt extent. The ſaline mixture, nitre, and the ſpirit of Minderirus. Blood-letting, in caſes of plethora, whether venous or arterial. Bliſters, eſpecially

eſpecially when there is any local affection. Laxatives, with a view only to keep the body open, except when plethora is preſent. Emetics, either in full or divided doſes, but particularly tartar emetic and James's powder, which, when adminiſtered at the firſt attack, are frequently ſucceſsful in removing the fever. Wine and cordial ſtimulants. Mild ſudorifics, employed without the hot regimen. Opium, and other ſedatives, given for the purpoſe of removing the ſymptoms of irritation. Tonic and ſtrengthening remedies, the principal of which is the Peruvian bark.

When the obſtruction of the menſes is to be conſidered as a primary diſeaſe, it is not an object of our preſent inquiry. When it occurs as a ſymptom of chronic weakneſs, it is moſt effectually removed by remedies which reſtore the tone of the ſyſtem. Warm and ſtimulating laxatives too are ſometimes uſed with peculiar propriety, juſt at the period when the menſes are naturally expected. If the menſes ſhould at laſt return with pain and difficulty, warm fomentations, pediluvium, opium, muſk, and other antiſpaſmodics are indicated.—Calculous concretions in the biliary ducts, when they occur as ſymptomatic in chronic weakneſs, require the general cure of

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the complaint. Laxatives, emetics, antiſcorbutic juices, abſorbents, opiates, antiſpaſmodics, and corroborants, are found ſerviceable. Opiates are principally to be employed, when, from a ſpaſmodic affection, there is pain in the region of the liver. But when this ſymptom takes place, emetics are evidently dangerous, and blood-letting in full habits is often uſeful.

INDICATION III.

We come now to the laſt part of the cure, in which the indication is to reſtore the tone and vigor of the ſyſtem. This important change is to be made by the uſe of aſtringents, ſtimulants, and tonics. Theſe remedies, when prudently adminiſtered, ſtrengthen the ſyſtem. But they are often employed in ſuch an improper manner, as to diſagree with the patient, and to increaſe the diſeaſe. The prudent exhibition of a remedy is of the utmoſt conſequence to its ſucceſsful operation. But ignorance and prudence are perpetually at variance. They oppoſe each other with warmth, and, by the unhappy conflict, reaſon is degraded, ſociety is injured, the order and harmony of things is ſtrangely perverted. Aſtringents, ſtimulants, and tonics, being all ſtrengthening medicines, it is difficult to draw the exact

exact line of diſtinction between them. Aſtringents, which increaſe the firmneſs and coheſion of the ſimple ſolids, do neceſſarily increaſe the tone and contractile force of the living fibres. Stimulants and tonics likewiſe, which act principally on the living fibres, have conſiderable influence on the ſimple ſolids.

Before we proceed to inquire into the particular uſe and miſapplication of aſtringents, ſtimulants, and tonics, it may juſt be hinted, that we have already treated of the good effects of exerciſe and of cold air, which are powerful ſtrengtheners of the ſyſtem. I muſt repeat it, that exceſs of warmth, and the neglect of exerciſe, will certainly fruſtrate every attempt towards a cure. Good aliment, if it be not well digeſted, will not afford proper nouriſhment to the body. The beſt corroborating medicines will not reſtore the tone of a weakened conſtitution, unleſs the ſtomach be able to extract their virtues. But the good effects of them will never be completely obtained by any one, without the aſſiſtance of cold air and exerciſe. For this reaſon, whatever prevents the application of cold air and the uſe of exerciſe, is extremely unfavorable to the cure of chronic weakneſs. When the patient's indolence and caprice hinder the ſucceſsful ope-

ration of remedies, the humane mind is naturally hurt, and pity is moved at the ſight of diſtreſs, which might otherwiſe have been happily relieved.

ASTRINGENT remedies are found efficacious in the removal of chronic weakneſs. They give ſtrength and firmneſs to the ſimple ſolids, and conſequently aſſiſt the action of the muſcular fibres. They invigorate the contractile power of the heart and arteries. They reſtore tone to the ſtomach and bowels; they give appetite, moderate the proceſs of fermentation, prevent acidity, and promote digeſtion.

The uva urſi, the bark of the oak, campeachy wood, tormentil and biſtort, are frequently given with this view, and are efficacious aſtringents. The boles, dragon's blood, and japan earth, are ſaid to be ſometimes ſerviceable, but their operation is weak and uncertain.

Alum is a powerful aſtringent. It is a compoſition formed by the union of an argillacious earth with the vitriolic acid. It is a natural production, but one which may be eaſily imitated by art. Applied to the lips, it renders them pale, by producing a conſtriction of their veſ-

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ſels. It poſſeſſes the power of hardening animal ſubſtances, and of preſerving them from corruption *. It is a remedy which is often employed with great advantage in chronic weakneſs. Its efficacy is obvious in relaxations of the ſtomach and bowels †, and of the urinary paſſages. It is particularly ſerviceable, when there is a local relaxation of the uterine veſſels, attended with a flooding or too copious a diſcharge of the menſes. Alum readily diſſolves in aqueous fluids, and, when properly diluted, enters into the circulatory ſyſtem, and is applied to every part of the body. It is a remedy of an active operation, and may in many caſes be taken in conſiderable doſes. But alum will by no means agree with every conſtitution, for it is ſometimes found to irritate the alimentary canal, and to excite pain and ſickneſs.

* Vid. Sir John Pringle's Obſervations on Septics and Antiſeptics.

† Percival's Eſſays, vol. 2, p. 196. "This remedy, when continued for a ſufficient length of time, ſeems to abate flatulence, to obviate ſpaſm, to improve the appetite, and to ſtrengthen the organs of digeſtion." Dr. Percival likewiſe mentions ſeveral caſes of obſtinate colics, which were cured by the uſe of alum.

Galls, given in moderate doſes, have been employed with ſucceſs in great relaxations of the ſyſtem, and particularly in uterine hemorrhages which have endangered life *. They poſſeſs ſtrong ſtiptic qualities, and a powerful remedy, uſed with judgment, is requiſite in a dangerous diſeaſe.—The ſugar of lead, ſo called from its ſweetneſs, being a compoſition of lead and a vegetable acid, has alſo been recommended in ſimilar caſes. It is indeed a moſt powerful aſtringent, but its pernicious effects on the nervous ſyſtem, have deterred the regular practitioner from uſing it with any degree of freedom.

STIMULANTS are a claſs of remedies that are extremely numerous. The following are thoſe which are in general uſe among the ableſt phyſicians, and many of them ſeem evidently poſſeſſed alſo of antiſpaſmodic virtues. Peppermint, cinnamon, lavender, canella alba, cloves, ginger, camphor, gum guaiac, Virginian ſnake-root, balſams, muſtard, horſe-raddiſh, caſtor, aſafætida, æther, ſalt of hartſhorn, wine, ſpirits, common ſalt, &c. But it is unneceſſary to enlarge either on the chymical compoſition, or the natural hiſtory of theſe remedies; for they are ſubjects

* Dr. Fordice's Lectures on the Practice of Phyſic.

jects already well diſcuſſed in books of chymiſtry, and of the materia medica.

The prudent uſe of ſtimulants often affords much relief in caſes of chronic weakneſs, eſpecially when that diſeaſe is accompanied with great languor and torpor of the living powers. Stimulants excite the action of the nervous ſyſtem. They accelerate the circulation, promote the diſcharge by the ſkin, and eliminate from the blood thoſe putreſcent particles, which are often retained in conſequence of languor and debility. They increaſe the periſtaltic motion of the alimentary tube; they retard fermentation, prevent acidity, and forward the digeſtion of the aliment. By this means the appetite is improved, and the proceſs of nutrition carried on in a more perfect manner. I have already obſerved, that the moderate uſe of ſpices along with our aliment, is not only admiſſible, but evidently proper in chronic weakneſs.

Stimulants may be united with tonics, whoſe ſalutary operation they ſometimes promote, as they tend to prevent them from producing any ſenſe of weight and oppreſſion in the ſtomach.—Hot inflammatory ſtimulants ſhould be employed with caution; for when uſed too freely, they cauſe

cauſe a morbid circulation of the blood, excite an unnatural heat, and injure materially the conſtitution. I have known them indeed given in ſo acrid a ſtate, as to excoriate the patient's mouth and throat. The reader will eaſily judge how dangerous the effects of ſuch a remedy muſt be, on ſo delicate an organ as the human ſtomach. It ſeemed as if the practitioner was of opinion, that the acrimony of his medicine would inſure its ſucceſs.—No ſtimulants ſhould ever be employed for a great length of time without intermiſſion, for the long-continued uſe of them is a notorious abuſe of medicine.

In ſome conſtitutions where the hectic fever is ſtrongly prevalent, ſtimulants of every kind, eſpecially in hot weather, are found to heat and diſagree with the patient. I have ſeen ſeveral inſtances, in which even the mildeſt ſtimulants have produced this effect. In theſe peculiarities of temperament, the phyſician, perceiving that his patient is of an inflammatory habit, will naturally deſiſt from the uſe of ſtimulants, and endeavor to alleviate his ſufferings, by a practice founded ſomewhat on the cooling antiphlogiſtic plan, but without the uſe of unneceſſary evacuations.

Tonics

Tonics are the laſt remedies that we ſhall have occaſion to mention. They are juſtly ranked among the moſt valuable that are uſed in the cure of chronic weakneſs. They obviate the laxity of the habit, and tend to remove the very cauſe of the complaint. They ſtrengthen and conſolidate. They increaſe the nervous influence, and conſequently facilitate the performance of the different functions of the animal economy. They invigorate the contractions of the heart and arteries. They increaſe the tone of the alimentary canal, and promote the digeſtion of the food and the proceſs of nutrition. They obviate a morbid exceſs of general irritability, which diſtreſſes the patient, and renders him ſubject to have the eaſe of his mind and body diſturbed by every trivial incident. They take off a ſenſation of trembling about the heart and ſtomach, which is a frequent and diſtreſſing ſymptom in this complaint. "If coſtiveneſs ariſe from weakneſs of the alimentary canal, they tend to remove it. If a diarrhæa occur from irritability and relaxation, they check the diſcharge by directly obviating the cauſe. If colic pains, loſs of appetite, frequent vomiting, palpitations of the heart, dejection of ſpirits, obſtruction of the menſes, defective perſpiration, &c. are the conſequences of weakneſs and mobility, no remedies are

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ſo well adapted for the removal of thoſe morbid affections *."

The tonics to be employed in chronic weakneſs are cold bathing, the preparations of ſteel, and chalybeate waters, bitters, and the Peruvian bark.

Cold bathing is an excellent remedy. The application of the water is made to the ſurface of the body, but by means of the general ſympathy which takes place, its tonic effects are readily communicated to the moſt interior parts. It ſtrengthens in particular the ſyſtem of the abſorbent and exhalant veſſels, and moderates too copious an evacuation by the cutaneous pores. It is a powerful bracer, and very ſerviceable in the removal of irritability. Cold bathing deſtroys too that unnatural delicacy of conſtitution which ariſes from exceſs of heat, and is ſo extremely diſtreſſing to the patient. For while that delicacy ſubſiſts, his happineſs is the ſport of every wind, and the inſtability of his health keeps pace with the changeableneſs of the weather. Such a ſtate of body, which, from the inconſiderate-

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* Abuſe of Medicine, p. 30.

neſs of mankind is frequent beyond expreſſion, renders the perſon a true object of compaſſion.

The degree of coldneſs in the water ſhould be proportioned to the patient's ſtrength of conſtitution. If the water be too cold, it will prevent that ſalutary re-action of the heart and arteries, which is indicated after bathing by the ſenſation of a gentle univerſal warmth. To promote this re-action of the vaſcular and nervous ſyſtems, the patient ſhould have acquired by exerciſe a moderate degree of heat before he goes into the water. It is often proper, in caſes of great weakneſs, to begin with a temperate bath, and afterwards to proceed to the uſe of one which is colder. For this purpoſe the waters of Buxton and Matlock, in Derbyſhire, are often highly ſerviceable in chronic weakneſs.

Bathing in the ſea, when it is properly indicated, is found in fact to be more efficacious than bathing in the cold bath. The water of the ſea is impregnated with ſalts which ſtimulate the ſurface, and contribute to excite the re-action of the ſyſtem. The greater ſpecific gravity of the ſea water, gives a greater preſſure upon the ſurface of the body. The ſea breezes too promote

appetite, aſſiſt digeſtion, and invigorate the conſtitution.

But whether the water be ſalt or freſh, the frequency of bathing and the time of continuing in it, can only be determined by the nature and ſymptoms of the diſeaſe. To bathe three or four times a week is generally ſufficient. A patient who is greatly debilitated ſhould not bathe too frequently, and he ſhould remain in the water but a ſingle moment. One of greater ſtrength may uſe the bath more freely, and continue in it for a few minutes. Cold bathing is particularly adapted to remove the lingering pains of chronic rheumatiſm, which are a common attendant on chronic weakneſs. Swimming in a temperate water is an uſeful exerciſe, requiring the action of almoſt every muſcle. It may be employed too at a ſeaſon of the year, when the warmth of the weather will not admit exerciſes of a different kind.

The preparations of ſteel are medicines which are highly valued in this diſeaſe. They are ſafe as well as efficacious tonics; and in this reſpect, therefore, preferable in general to the preparations of copper, which nevertheleſs have of late been recommended by ſeveral eminent phyſicians,

ans in particular caſes of chronic weakneſs. From a chymical analyſis of the human body, a ſmall portion of iron is found by the accurate chymiſt to be one of its conſtituent parts.

Steel, when rendered ſoluble in aqueous fluids, by means of its union with an acid, has a ſucceſsful operation in ſtrengthening the ſyſtem. The ſalt of ſteel, a neutral in which ſteel and the vitriolic acid are combined, is a valuable remedy, and capable of producing very good effects. It will diſſolve in water, enter the veſſels, mix with the blood, and be diſtributed over the whole ſyſtem. When ſteel is finely powdered and taken in ſubſtance, a portion of it is diſſolved by the vegetable acid which is in the firſt paſſages, and by this ſolution its action on the human body is promoted.—The effects of ſteel are very general in removing all the ſymptons of chronic weakneſs. It is a medicine well adapted to obviate relaxations of the womb, to remove obſtructions of the menſes, or to check preternatural uterine diſcharges, whether of mucus or of blood.

For the ſame intentions, the uſe of chalybeate waters are ſtrongly recommended, and where there is no venous or arterial plethora, they are remedies which are extremely uſeful in reſtor-

ing the tone of the ſyſtem. The cold water in which the ſteel is contained, contributes to the efficacy of the medicine. Mineral waters of the chalybeate kind are particularly ſerviceable in the glandular obſtructions of children and young people, which frequently take place in very weak and relaxed conſtitutions. In ſuch caſes mineral waters, poſſeſſed of a purgative quality, are frequently uſed, but never without pernicious conſequences. Chalybeate waters ſupport the ſtrength of the patient; and, by penetrating into the minuteſt veſſels, they tend to waſh out of the ſyſtem every ſpecies of acrimony, which is capable of irritating the tender and delicate ſubſtance of the lymphatic glands.

The chalybeate water of Scarbrough is of ſingular utility in chronic weakneſs, and is juſtly celebrated in the preſent age. Scarbrough has the united advantages of a good ſituation, of a wholeſome air and a neighbouring ſea. Other ſteel mineral waters, ſuch as thoſe of Spa, Pyrmont, Harrogate, &c. are valuable and efficacious medicines. The artificial Pyrmont water, which is made by impregnating water with fixt air and iron, has of late been frequently employed with ſucceſs. The fixt air tends to moderate the fermentation in the ſtomach,

mach, and to prevent putrefaction. The Bath waters too are poſſeſſed of a chalybeate quality *, and, from their peculiar nature, are at once both ſtimulant and tonic. They are often of great ſervice in chronic weakneſs, and particularly when the ſtomach and bowels are much diſeaſed, the appetite depraved, and the digeſtion weak †.

Beſides the intrinſic efficacy of theſe mineral waters, the patient, who reſorts to public places, has the benefit of change of air, exerciſe, relaxation from buſineſs, chearful and agreeable company. Theſe circumſtances, taken together, are of importance in promoting the recovery of health. Chearful company is often particularly ſerviceable to a mind weakened and dejected. The exerciſe of travelling is, for the moſt part, as pleaſant as it is uſeful; and a freedom from the anxiety of buſineſs is frequently not to be obtained, but by a change of place, and a removal from the hurrying ſcenes of life.

Bitters, and the Peruvian bark, are the laſt tonic medicines we ſhall mention. They are valuable remedies

* Vid. Falconer on Bath Waters, p. 291.

† Ibid. p. 343.

remedies in the cure of chronic weakneſs. They contribute much towards the removal of the complaint. They increaſe the tone of the ſyſtem in a high degree, and facilitate the performance of the different functions of the body, whether animal, vital, or natural. By increaſing the tone of the circulatory ſyſtem, they obviate ſickneſs and fainting, which take place in conſequence of weakneſs and irritability. They often relieve in caſes where hectic ſymptoms are evidently preſent, tho' ſometimes hectic ſymptoms, eſpecially in very warm weather, are increaſed by theſe remedies, and contraindicate their uſe. The bitters moſt commonly employed, are gentian, chamomile, tanſy, orange peel, ſima ruba, zeduary, eleutheria, and columbo root. The Peruvian bark is experienced to be one of the moſt uſeful remedies in chronic weakneſs. But it is a vulgar error to ſuppoſe that the bark will agree with every conſtitution. It is ſometimes found of little or no ſervice in this diſeaſe, eſpecially in ſome dry, lean, and bilious habits. Bitters and the bark may be taken in various forms, as is moſt agreeable to the patient. The decoction, the infuſion, the extract, and the powder, are frequently employed. The cold infuſion of the bark is ſtronger than the decoction; but the powder, when it agrees with the ſtomach, is preferable to

any

any other preparation. Theſe remedies are frequently given along with the vitriolic and other mineral acids, all of which are obſerved to retard fermentation, to prevent acidity, produce appetite, and promote digeſtion.

With theſe remarks concerning tonics, I ſhall conclude this treatiſe on chronic weakneſs. The ſubject of it is undoubtedly important, however imperfect the execution may be. On this point candid and judicious readers will form an opinion for themſelves, and their opinion ought always to be conſidered as deciſive. The author may truly affirm, that he has ſpared no labor to avoid obſcurity and the miſrepreſentation of facts; and that, beſides his own obſervations on the diſeaſe, he has had frequent opportunities of hearing the ſentiments, and of ſeeing the practice of ſeveral eminent phyſicians, whoſe genius and erudition do honor to the age in which they live, and whoſe names will be moſt reſpectfully tranſmitted to poſterity.

During the courſe of theſe obſervations, we have ſeen what various means are to be employed in the cure of chronic weakneſs. Different remedies are requiſite in different caſes, whether they be intended to palliate particular ſymptoms,

or

or to eradicate the complaint. An injudicious choice of them fruſtrates the intentions of the phyſician, and leaves the unhappy patient to ſtruggle on with the miſeries of his diſeaſe. Such is the variety, and ſuch are the peculiarities of conſtitutions, that a remedy, which relieves one perſon, will injure another. It is therefore of great importance that the phyſician ſhould be extremely attentive to acquire an exact hiſtory and knowledge of the caſe, and judiciouſly to ſelect thoſe medicines which are beſt adapted to the patient's temperament, and to the peculiar ſymptoms and nature of the affection. The moſt efficacious remedies ſhould be given in the moſt ſimple, elegant, and agreeable forms. Elegance of preſcription, without ſimplicity, is not ſufficient. Simplicity of preſcription is of the firſt importance towards ſucceſsfully aſcertaining the reſpective virtues of different medicines.—Beſides the neceſſary application of remedies, we have found that a ſtrict attention to regimen is of the utmoſt conſequence. Thoſe practitioners are deceived, who aſſert that regimen is little to be regarded in chronic weakneſs. We would fain hope there are but few who are ſo blind to the real welfare of their patients. Without a proper regimen, the operation of remedies will diſappoint the otherwiſe reaſonable expectations of the

phyſician.

phyſician.—The patient, knowing the abilities of the practitioner, and having entered on a courſe of proper remedies, ſhould ſubmit himſelf to his care, with full confidence of obtaining all the relief which the art of medicine can ſafely procure. He ſhould remember that, conſidering the obſtinacy and previous duration of his complaint, a ſudden change from a ſtate of morbid relaxation to a ſtate of natural tenſion, however deſirable at firſt ſight it may ſeem, is not only impoſſible in the nature of things, but were it even poſſible, would, in all probability, be attended with the greateſt danger.

THE END.